

LETTERS
ON
EARLY
EDUCATION

Pestalozzi

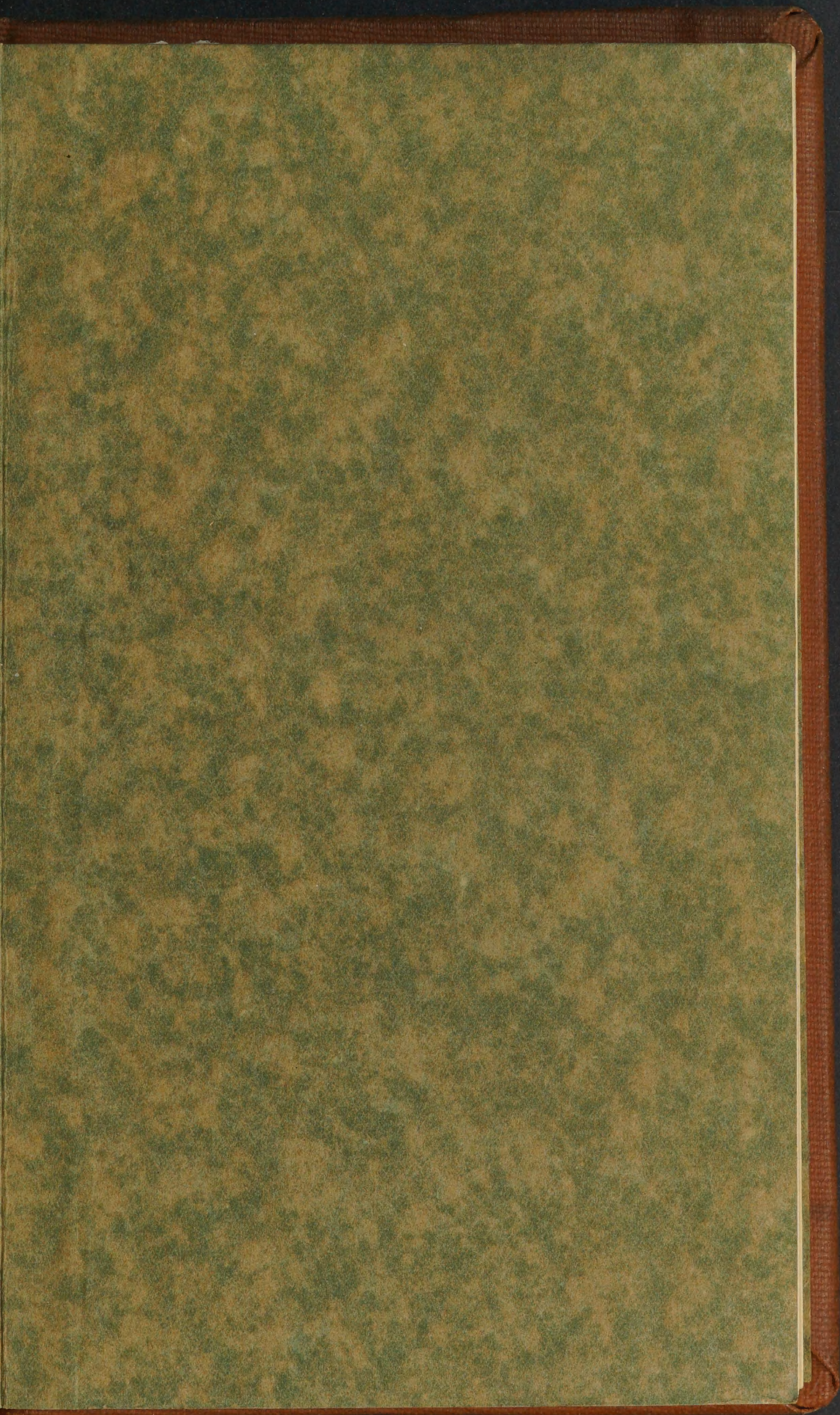
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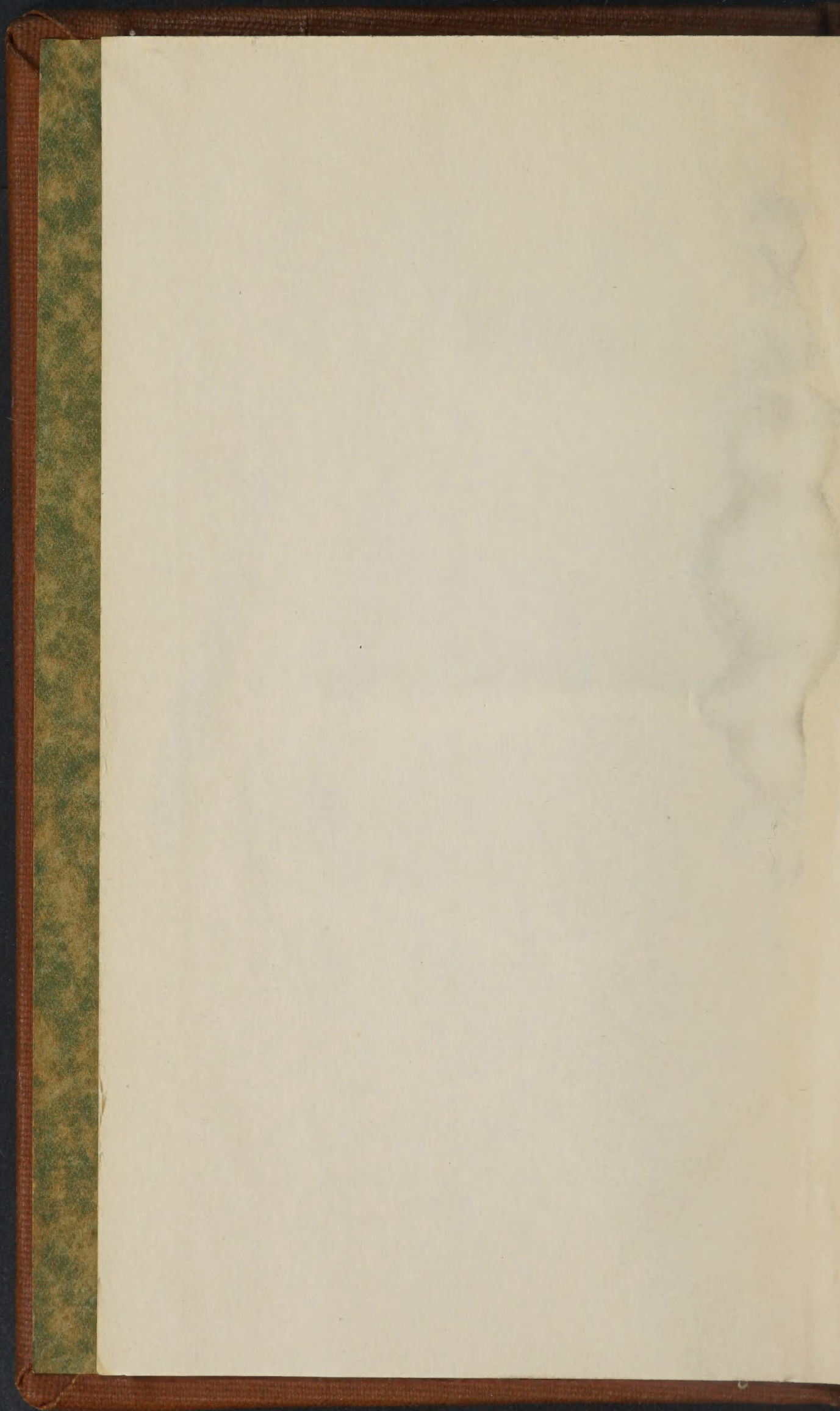
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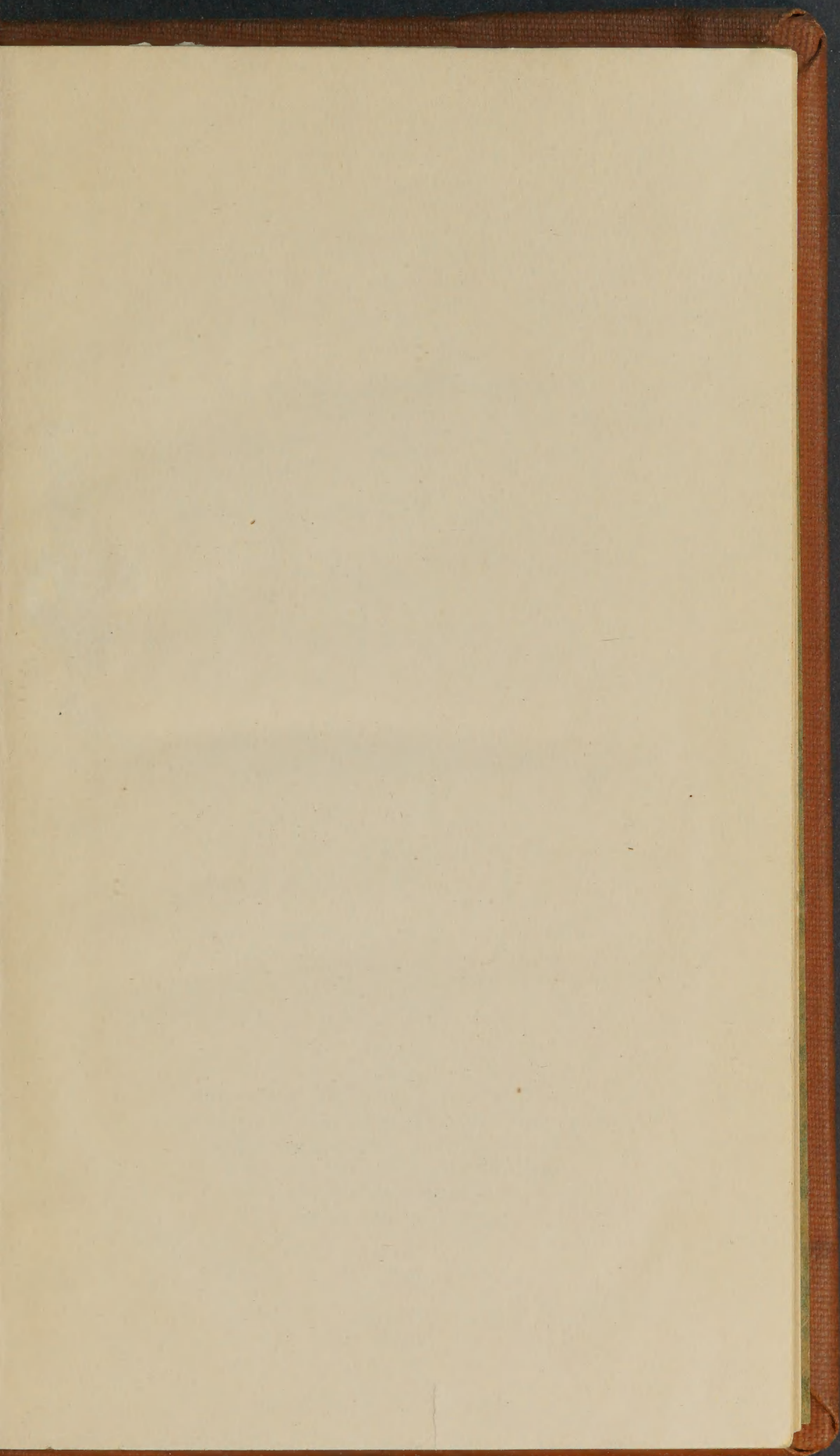


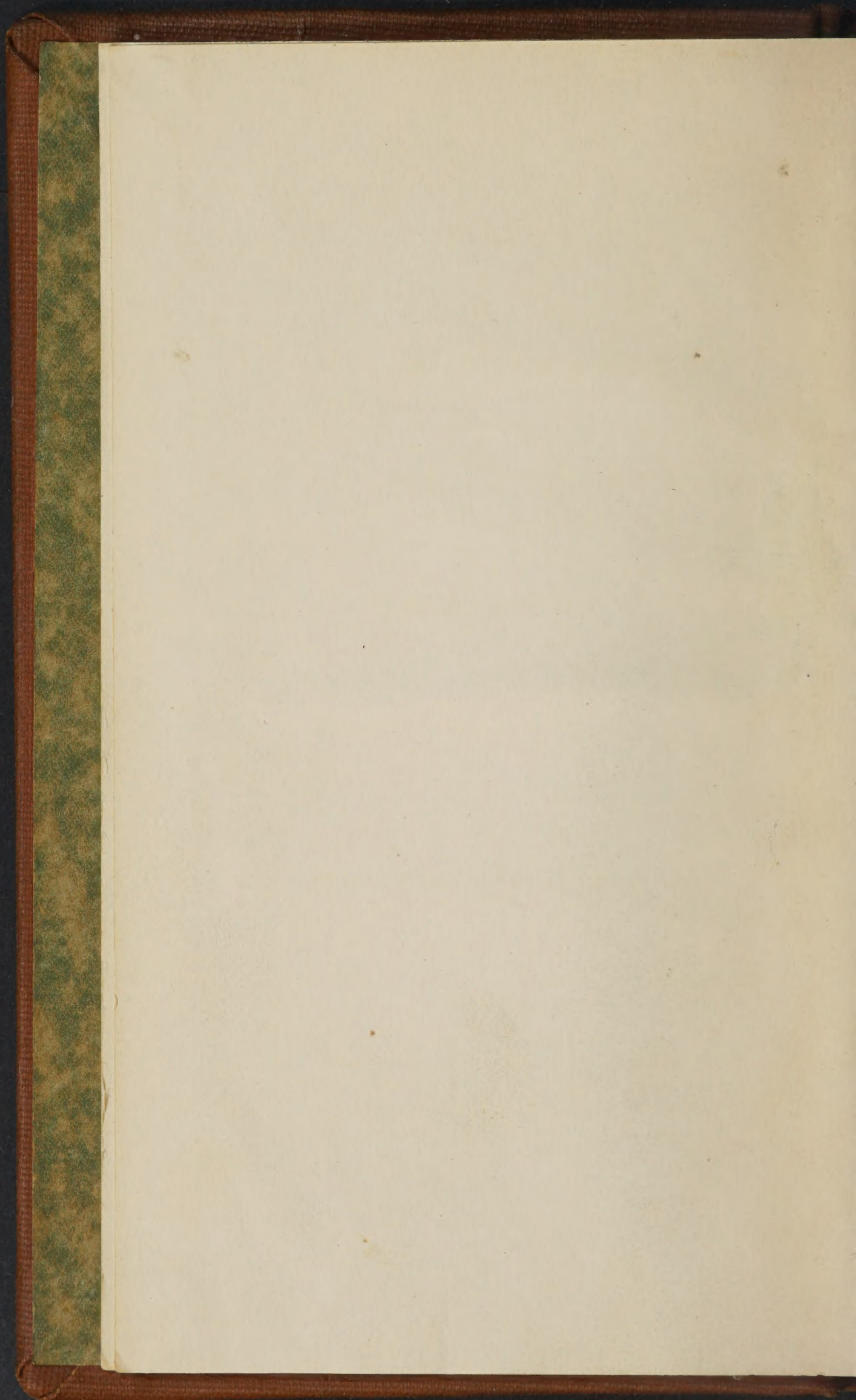












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LETTERS

ON

EARLY EDUCATION.

ADDRESSED TO J. P. GREAVES, ESQ.

BY

PESTALOZZI.

Translated from the German Manuscript.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF PESTALOZZI.

LONDON:

SHERWOOD, GILBERT, AND PIPER, PATERNOSTER ROW;
HARRIS, CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD;
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE;
DARTON AND HARVEY, GRACECHURCH STREET;
AND HAILES, PICCADILLY.

1827.

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LONDON:
W. SEARE, PRINTER, 11, HUDGE ROW.

ADVERTISEMENT.



WHEN the Translator, at the request of his much-respected friend, to whom the following Letters are addressed, undertook to revise the manuscript with a view to its publication, he was fortunate enough to obtain from PESTALOZZI, permission to make any alterations that might become necessary from the circumstances under which the letters had originally been written.

Of this privilege the Translator has availed himself freely—but not more so than he considered himself authorised by the state in which he found the manuscript, and his familiarity with PESTALOZZI's views, which the study of his works, and the recollection of the days spent in his society, have tended to produce. However, as he “who might have sanctioned the execution, as he had encouraged the design, is now no more, the Translator has the satisfaction to state, that the following sheets, previously to their publication” have been submitted to the eye of some of the warmest, as well as most enlightened friends of PESTALOZZI.

And here the Translator might address himself to the indulgence of his readers, and call their attention to the

difficulties which, as a foreigner, he must necessarily have had to encounter, in writing in a language not his own ; but he prefers an appeal to their sense of justice, and earnestly solicits, whenever the sentiment may be wanting in perspicuity, or the expression in correctness,—whenever, from an attempt at distinctness, the impressive eloquence of the original may have been “ sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,”—that these blemishes may be visited *solely* on him, the Translator, and that the candid readers may be guided by those passages which come home to their bosoms with the genuine force of truth, and by those only, in forming an idea of the views of the truly venerable author.

LONDON, AUGUST 21, 1827.

MEMOIR
OF
THE LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
PESTALOZZI.

“ He, whene’er he taught,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet’s force,
And all were swift to follow, whom all lov’d.
That sun is set! O rise, some other such!”

MEMOIR, &c.

IF an individual, at the matured age of manhood, resigns the enjoyment of ease and honourable independence, and embarks in a task, from which uncommon energies might have shrunk, and which ambition would hold in scorn; if that individual, actuated by motives of the purest benevolence, is not content to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted, or to hold out rewards to persevering industry, but proceeds direct to the sole aim of stopping the source of all the misery that surrounds him; if, indefatigable in his zeal, he descends to the very humblest exertions of the humblest sphere; if, heedless of the imputations of vain enthusiasm, or of mischievous innovation, he pursues his career, anxious only to meet theoretical doubts by practical evidence; then we may be justified in

inscribing his name among the list of those, whose feelings and whose efforts, successful or not, have done honour to mankind

But if he does succeed : if he obtains results, and commands acknowledgments, which bear full testimony to the intrinsic truth, and the general utility of his ideas; if, with a limited knowledge of facts, he aims at combinations which had escaped the scrutinising eye of philosophers, and with scanty means and inferior instruments, achieves that which the more highly gifted and favoured had attempted in vain ; if he succeeds in conquering the prejudice of some, and in interesting the indolence of others ; if the number of those is daily increasing, who from cold neglect proceed to cool examination, and from examination to genuine regard, and from regard to warm approbation ; then we may say, that his name, commended by merit, and illustrated by genius, has grown on our esteem.

And if we learn the history of his plans, the vicissitudes of his life ; if we see that individual, a republican both by birth and by principle, meeting with the cordial support of almost all the governments of the Continent, and honoured with high personal distinctions by the sovereigns of Russia, of Austria, and of Prussia ; if his plans are approved of and adopted, not only in his

own country, but throughout that extensive range of provinces related to it by the bond of a common language, and which have within these fifty years left all other parts of the continent behind by their intellectual efforts; if, in spite of that distinction he has the mortification, by a strange combination of circumstances, to see obstacles thrown in the way of his own immediate exertions, and while the efforts of others were flourishing, to observe the seed of decay in that creation, from which he had anticipated that the joyous sight of its prospering youth should gladden his old age; if an unparalleled brilliancy of general success could not rescue him from the poignant experience of numberless individual disappointments; but if, after an active career of more than fifty, and a life of more than eighty years, that individual has breathed his last, separated from his friends, and from the scene of his late success, and yet with the fullest confidence that the results of his efforts shall survive, and the aim to which his existence was devoted, shall be finally accomplished; if that confidence is re-echoed by the number of those who had loved and revered him, and their number is equal to those who in different countries had known his person or examined his works; these facts may well be calculated to excite some deeper interest in the fate of the man to

whose life they belong,—and in the character of his cause.

That man was PESTALOZZI,—and the cause he pursued was that of popular education.

HENRY PESTALOZZI was born at Zurich, the 12th of January, 1745. He soon lost his father, an esteemed physician, and his education was superintended by some distant relatives. At school Henry was soon known to be “no common boy;” he evinced great energy of character on several occasions. His benevolence was unbounded, and together with it he manifested at an early age an irrepressible spirit of indignation at every thing that appeared calculated to injure the helpless, or to promote selfish enjoyment at the expence of others. When a youth, history, and especially that of classical antiquity, and of his own country, constituted his favourite study. It furnished him with ample materials for thought: not satisfied with a passive admiration for distinguished characters, he inquired into the motives of actions, and traced the consequences of events; he watched the rise and progress of social institutions; in viewing the fate of nations, he never lost sight of the feelings of individuals; the brightest page of history, on which he would dwell with genuine enthusiasm, presented to him the result of human genius, of human exertions, and of human sufferings;

the struggles for the prerogatives of a few, and the rights of the many,—the comparison between splendour and utility—between schemes of national aggrandisement, and the enjoyment of individual comfort, formed frequent subjects of his incessant researches.

His time was divided between solitary meditations and intense study. Among the results of the latter, was a spirited translation of several speeches of Demosthenes, and the composition of some essays, which he then published, on the formation of character for public life, and on the Spartan legislation. The fruits of the former were a variety of plans, undigested, of course, and unsupported by experience, but ingenious, and sprung from a generous heart, for the improvement of popular institutions, and an equal, or at least, an equitable distribution of wealth.

From excessive study he fell into a severe illness, and when he had recovered, he at once altered his plan of life, and abandoned his literary pursuits. He burnt all his papers, gave up entirely the reading of books, applied himself to the study of agriculture, and purchased an extensive farm in the canton of Aargau.

At the age of twenty-two we find him living in rural retirement, separated from all his former connections. But how far different his retirement from that of the fastidious, who, weary with imaginary

pleasures, are yet unable to enjoy real ones ; who feel disgusted with society, and oppressed by solitude ! PESTALOZZI was disgusted with the artificial system of society, with its heartless enjoyments, and its vain professions : the little, the very little that he had yet seen of it, was more than sufficient to prompt him to escape its trammels, without either insulting or shunning its pale. He would value it, not as a source of gratification, but as a sphere of useful exertion. He never affected to despise, but he endeavoured to cure the follies of men. He felt revolted by the pride and the selfishness of the higher orders, in the same measure as he was touched by the misery of the labouring classes and the poor. He conceived justly, that there was no hope of ever benefitting the latter, without an exact knowledge of their wants, such as might be acquired by constant observation, or of convincing the former of their culpable supineness, without setting the example of a disinterested and active part in the relief of the poor. He was deeply impressed with the conviction of the inefficacy of all those plans which are laid down in the closet, or derived from books, and unsupported by an intimate acquaintance with life.

Experience taught him to look to the deficiency of education as the principal source of the misery by which he was surrounded. The want of all the com-

forts of life was, in most cases, the consequence of the want of an education, which might have enabled the individual to obtain an honest livelihood. But far the greater evil was the demoralization, which must necessarily ensue when childhood has been neglected, and youth exposed to all the temptations of life, under scanty circumstances, unprotected by principle, and unassisted by habits of industry.

PESTALOZZI determined to try what education might do even for those who were taken from the dregs of the people, and who were not intended to be raised above an humble walk in life, but in which they might move as honest and useful members of society. He received into his house fifty children, most of them orphans of the poorest class, or children of vagabond beggars. He had a share in an extensive cotton manufactory, which was constructed on his own estate. In this, and in some agricultural occupations, the children were employed, and at the same time treated in the kindest manner, and with the most careful attention to their wants. PESTALOZZI himself acted as a father to them all, not only by thus providing for them, but by undertaking the superintendence of the whole of their education, and giving them all the instruction that might be useful in their circumstances. In teaching them, he followed a most original plan,

which enabled him to conduct large classes, to occupy all, and yet to fix the attention of every individual child separately. Sometimes he would teach them, while they were employed in some easy manual labour, or he would converse with them, to communicate to them useful information, and to draw out and develop their judgment. Some exercises were at that time novel, and had never been practised with the same perfection in larger schools; for instance, mental calculation, in which they acquired such skill and facility, that PESTALOZZI himself was obliged to follow them on the slate, to ascertain the correctness of their solutions, which were given much more rapidly than he could have obtained them.

It will be readily conceived, that children thus circumstanced, derived the greatest benefit from his kind and unremitting care, and that he succeeded most completely in the moral management of pupils, all of them devoted to him by the strongest ties of gratitude.

With this establishment he went on for fifteen years, without the least support of any private individual or public body. Keeping up as he did the whole, by his own means, his property was reduced, and must at length have been exhausted. The merit of his personal sacrifices, and the benevolence of his intentions, was

never questioned; but he was considered an enthusiast, who would ruin himself by an undertaking, which, though calculated to do good, was by no means judicious in one who might spend his time, and enjoy his existence, in a more profitable manner.

The longer PESTALOZZI persevered in his own efforts at Neuhof, unassisted as he was, the firmer grew his conviction that education was the principal means not only for a partial or transitory melioration of the state of the lower classes, but for that end which had been the early object of his patriotic dreams—the emancipation of the people from the thralldom of ignorance and oppression, and of the numberless evils springing from both. But the more he gave himself up to these ideas—the more attentively he examined the actual state of those by whom he was surrounded, and the means for improvement which that state, however degraded, would still suggest to any one who knew how to wield them—the more did he feel the necessity of another principle of a more efficient nature, than any system of instruction in a school could ever present. He looked round for some ground the most extensive, on which to begin, and for some power the most irresistible in its action, by which to animate the new system of improvement.

Then it was that the thought occurred to him—a thought so natural, so familiar to every one, but so little seen in that light in which it then flashed on his mind—that the earliest, the most extensive, the best adapted ground for education, is no other than that same domestic circle in which the infant years are now spent without the benefit of a kind and salutary direction, and but too frequently under the baneful influence of bad example: and that the most energetic power in the whole range of the moral world, sympathy, and affection; and, if any, of all human affections the one whose motive is free from any baser alloy, maternal love, was the power to be gained for the great object he had in view.

That thought at once held that undivided possession of his mind, which a familiar thought will sometimes acquire from a novel combination: it inspired him with the most sanguine hopes, and was, from that moment, the nucleus, the luminous centre of all his plans and his efforts.

He repeated, considerately, the word of his first enthusiasm: “No, the moral elevation of the people is not a dream: the power that shall effect it, shall be in the keeping of the mother—of the infant—in the impregnable guard of innocence; let no man say that popular improvement is a dream.”

That first enthusiasm was not a transient one. It would be awakened in all its original vividness, on every occasion that might present an excitement; and even when latent, its energising influence was to him a source of incessant activity, of patience, and perseverance in the most arduous task.

Could the writer of these lines enumerate all the difficulties, all the causes of pungent disappointment and of protracted mortification—the parting with fondly cherished prospects—all the baulked hopes and frustrated designs, which, after the dream of youth was over, filled a large portion of the subsequent years of PESTALOZZI'S life; could he depict that utter forgetfulness of self, that unqualified sacrifice of individual interest and comfort, which rendered him greater even in his sufferings than in his success;* could he then venture upon any thing like a description of the man, such as he was when under the influence of that same inspiring thought—such as he who writes has seen him but a few years ago, warmed in conversation with friends, all of them his juniors by more than fifty years, on the subject in which his soul was merged—when

* “Più val d'ogni vittoria un bel soffrire.”

his voice rose to new modulation — when new confidence beamed in his eye, and serenity sat reinstated on his brow — when a smile played round his lip, and lighted up the very furrows that the eightieth year had engraven on his cheek, — when his chest heaved and expanded — when the spring of youth diffused itself over his frame; — could he convey to his readers but a faint shadow of that image, such as it now lives in his mind's eye, he might hope to throw round the memory of one of the noblest characters that interest, of which he is conscious that he shall excite but too slight a portion by the rapid and imperfect sketch, which he now resumes, of the leading events of PESTALOZZI's life.

PESTALOZZI laid down the results of his observations in a popular tale, "Leonard and Gertrude," which he published while at Neuhof. This work went through a number of editions, and was carefully revised and augmented by him; he considered it the most important of all his writings, and which throws most light on the practical tendency of his ideas. It is by no means easy to give an adequate account of that work. Those who take it up for the first time, or who meet with an abstract of the story, are struck with the neglect, and apparent ignorance of that sort of

management, by which even an ordinary writer would contrive to vary a hackneyed theme ; there is no combination of incidents, no calculation of effect, no raising of expectations ; there are episodes and digressions, which would annoy, but there is little that would attract a common novel reader ; it is indeed a tale, “ sans *love*,—sans *plot*,—sans every thing.” But this same tale, so obviously deficient in art, abounds in that excellence which Nature alone can impart, and which study can never attain. There is a truth in the sketching, and the colouring of the scenes, which more than makes up for the looseness of the thread by which they are strung together : it rivals the faithfulness of the Dutch school of painting, without imitating its laborious accuracy, which mistakes minuteness for variety, and quaintness for originality. It presents a spirited picture of Swiss manners : it does not shrink from the exposure of the corruption which prevails in many of those places so frequently looked upon by foreigners as the seats of primeval simplicity ; it exemplifies the detrimental consequences of an employment of the lower classes, which excluded all prospects of moral improvement, without leading to habits of regulated industry ; it lays down many observations well worth attending to, on the comparative influence of agricultural and of

industrial pursuits on the morals and the happiness of the people, on the value of property and of labour, and, last not least, it suggests matured plans for the adoption of salutary measures, which were based upon facts, and which afterwards stood the test of experience.

Education, of course, constitutes a prominent feature of those proposed measures. An individual is introduced, who, from motives closely related to those of PESTALOZZI, and in a situation like his own, determines upon overcoming prejudice by practice, and taking an active part in the execution of a new system. The difficulties of the task, and the insufficiency of mere theory, are clearly illustrated; and the final result is, that a man, with the advantage of thought and knowledge, has yet recourse, as to the best standard, to the example and assistance of a mother.

Gertrude is a mother. And if it is but too true, that there are not many mothers like Gertrude, and that none can be more deeply inspired, or more intimately elevated by maternal feeling, let no man say that there are not thousands, who, in the situation in which *they* are placed, with the facilities which *they* command, might be active to an infinitely wider extent than she, had they but the feeling of a Gertrude.

There is scarcely an instance in the works of any popular writer, of a standard character, endowed in a work of fiction with a "local habitation, and a name," that would at all furnish a parallel to the popularity of the name of Gertrude. Throughout the countries, in which PESTALOZZI'S work has long since been placed on a level with the first performances of genius, which advocate the cause of humanity, Gertrude's name recalls to the mind of the high and the low the image of one of the most beautiful characters of which fiction may boast, or which life may rival. Among the writers who have done justice to the merits of PESTALOZZI'S work, and whose vote well deserves a hearing, it is but fair to record one, who, although moving in a sphere of society, and known for peculiar shades of character, which would not much promote the relish of the simple and unpretending graces of a sketch like that of Gertrude, has yet in this, as in other instances, fully established her claims to the fame of the most tasteful and liberal-minded critic, who ever wrote in her language.

But the high character of "Leonard and Gertrude" is advocated more powerfully than by the eloquent encomium of De Staël, by the sympathy and the success of those, who, not content to admire, found

a source of new delight in realising the sentiments which it illustrated.

In the mean time, he who had first given them utterance, found his own progress daily more impeded, and his endeavours, not deserted, for they had never been supported, but more and more deprived of the prospects which he had still entertained of their cause becoming national: approval and admiration are but a poor return for the efforts of one who wants assistance for a philanthropic end; and the more truly he is disinterested, the more painfully must he be alive to the approach of circumstances which threaten to annihilate what has been achieved by sacrifices felt only where they failed. It was no longer possible for him to go on with his plan of providing for the poor at Neuhof; he was compelled, by imperious necessity, to resign the task which to him had been full of delight. He did so, with the consciousness that hundreds of children had been saved from a state of helplessness or corruption; and not without the confidence for the future, that in spite of the gloomy prospects of the present, "the burning flax should not be quenched, nor the bruised reed broken." But his hope grew fainter and fainter, and he fell into a state of melancholy, which

would have plunged any one else into permanent indolence.

Then it was, that the calamities of his country roused him once more to a sense of his powers, which had been eclipsed by his own disasters. The sufferings of Switzerland, during the revolution and the war, may be supposed to be known to English readers, at least from the feeling and poetic picture of "The Wanderer in Switzerland." The fury of war, the havoc of desolation, burst upon one canton after the other, and, in the language of the poet just now alluded to,

"—— the country's life retired,
Slowly driven from part to part;
UNDERWALDEN last expired,
UNDERWALDEN was the heart."

Into *Underwalden* PESTALOZZI went. The most desolate spot of the most desolate canton, the "deserted village" of Stanz, was to be the scene of his exertions. There were several among the members of the newly-established Directory of Switzerland, who had been interested in his ideas; some of them men of enlightened sentiments and of true patriotism, who conceived that the time was at hand for the regeneration of their country, and who saw, or fancied they saw, in the great events of the day, in the convulsive struggle of a neighbouring nation, and of their own, the signal of

a new era in history. They were not singular in their anticipations; and if they proved too sanguine, they might easily be pardoned for sharing in the general enthusiasm, which pervaded the continental nations, as though they had been bound by one electric chain, which was then struck by a long concealed flash of lightning. These men looked forward to the new order of things for the restoration of national independence; they hoped that the day was not far distant, when they might hail the revival of

—“TELL's great spirit, from the dead,

Return'd to animate an age forlorn.”

Among those best fitted to speak to that spirit, they conceived that there was the man, who had so eloquently pleaded, and so generously promoted, the cause of national education.

For a further trial of his ideas, PESTALOZZI was to open an asylum for the children of the inhabitants of Stanz and the neighbourhood, whose houses and fields lay in ashes. He cheerfully undertook the mission, exulting in the opportunity of a public trial, and heedless of the sacrifice by which it was attended.

His problem was to take the charge of seventy children, most of whom had passed the few years

of their lives in poverty and neglect, while other had just been deprived of the indulgence or the comforts of home; who resembled each other in one characteristic only,—in ignorance, and habitual idleness; whose parents were dissatisfied with the new administration, and prejudiced against PESTALOZZI's person, not only because he was the organ of that government, but still more so because he was a Protestant, they themselves having been brought up in the darkest bigotry of Roman Catholicism; children, who were incessantly instigated by their relatives against the discipline to which they had been submitted with reluctance; who were then all assembled in a building which was newly constructed, and not then quite finished, when it was assigned for the school: among them stood PESTALOZZI, unbefriended, unassisted, but by the odious authority of an unpopular magistracy, with no individual near him who could have entered into the spirit, or taken part in the execution of his views. Thus situated, his task was scarcely less difficult than that of one, who stands alone among a savage tribe, and who labours “to tame them,—to teach them,—to turn them to men.” And yet he never hesitated one moment to assert with confidence, “that the state of those children should be altered with no less celerity than the

vernal sun alters the bleak appearance of a wintry soil." And well might he add, in his relation of the result, "I was not disappointed; before the snow of our mountains melted under the influence of the vernal sun, those children could no longer have been recognised as the same beings they came to me."

If it be asked by what magic PESTALOZZI wrought that change, the simple answer is, by complete self-devotion to his task. He shared all the privations of the children; he was with them at their prayers, their instructions, at their work, and their recreations; the most conscientious father, the most affectionate mother, could not have done more than he did for them, animated as he was by that love which, "holds no office mean," that "entire affection" which, "scorneth nicer hands."

His first object was, to emulate the spirit, and to produce the results of the most perfect *domestic education*. Accordingly having gained their confidence for himself, he inspired them with that affection for each other, which ought to be the leading feature of every domestic circle. He trusted little in precept; but he was fully conscious that his own example was irresistible; and he built all his expectations on the developement, in their own breasts, of those feelings which would effectually gain them over to every thing that was good. All his regulations tended to this effect, that they

should be aware they could feel themselves happy only when they were good. Thus all his measures were powerfully seconded by a short but impressive appeal to their own judgments, which will never remain behind, when *true* feeling leads the way.

But let not this be mistaken for a system of refined selfishness, which holds out the gratification of self as the motive for goodness. It was not by the gratification, but it was positively by the act of giving up those desires which were merely selfish, that they were led to a feeling of happiness. All could feel happy in that state only when every one, for the benefit of all others, resigned a portion of that which he might have claimed for himself in preference to the rest. The very submission to the rules of discipline, which becomes necessary for the maintenance of order among a large number of pupils; the giving up of trifles, which, though harmless in themselves, would disturb the tone and character of the whole, are no slight imposition on the spirits of children, and more especially of such who have hitherto been entirely undisciplined. But the motive for the abandonment even of these trifles being *affection*, the imposition was not felt, and happiness was concomitant to those very acts, which, if required on other grounds, must have been attended by ill humour or alienation. This manage-

ment, if it is based upon an inexhaustible stock of benevolent feeling, requires also a great measure of firmness, which is so seldom found allied to it; but it is solely the joint action of those two qualities, which, though it is not intended to supersede punishment, *when it becomes necessary*, but rather to render it more effectual, at the same time is calculated to *prevent*, in the great majority of cases, the *necessity of punishment*.

This principle of moral education, which constitutes a prominent feature of PESTALOZZI'S plans, will not be found undeserving of attention, when it is remembered, that if generally kept in view, it might *end the heart-ache*, that, under the prevailing systems of the day, *youth* is heir to. Instead, therefore, of apologizing for having dwelt upon it in this place, the writer of these lines begs leave to add the mention of one fact, which may throw additional light on the subject.

The neighbouring village of Altdorf was destroyed by fire. PESTALOZZI assembled his flock round him, and addressed them:—"Children, Altdorf lies in ashes. Do you recollect the day when you first came here,—in want of every thing,—some of you shivering with cold,—others suffering from

disease—others subject to ill treatment—but all without a feeling of affection for others, or of happiness within yourselves. Such are the children of the Altdorfers this day. You feel happy—you have the benefit of useful instruction—you take pleasure in what is good. Shall we solicit our government to send us twenty of the children of Altdorf, that they may enjoy the same?" The answer was unanimous, and given with visible joy. But PESTALOZZI proceeded:—"Do not be too rash in your advances. There are thousands to be provided for, and if we receive the children from Altdorf, I cannot promise you that our allowance shall be increased. We may have to give up some of our comforts—if we share with them, we may have to impose privations on ourselves." But the children persisted in their offer; *for it came from the heart.*

This trait will speak to the truth of PESTALOZZI'S views in moral education, and it will serve to illustrate how unlike his lessons of morality were to those of common teachers. His principle was, to awaken the feeling, and *then* to give it a name, and, when it was alive, to substantiate it as a rule of action. The words which he made use of were few, and plain; but springing from intimate conviction, they were appropriate; and meeting a congenial feeling in his

hearers, they could not fail of being impressive. But let not any one presume, however well his talents and his accomplishments might enable him to convey instruction,—let him not presume, that he shall ever be able to influence the *character* of his pupils, to obtain by affection what authority cannot command, to animate them with zeal for that which is good, unless he can find it in his heart to resign every selfish motive, whether tending to ambition—*vile* ambition, wherever it stands in the way of generous sentiment,—or connected with the still more contemptible desire of filthy lucre—unless he can give himself up to his task with cheerful self-devotion. For the task of education, when it is resorted to from any other motive, is indeed one of the lowest and actually *degrading* employments of life; but when undertaken in that spirit, which rises above the consideration of self, however meanness may still deride, and imbecility affect to hold it in contempt, it ranks among the most honourable.

In the intellectual, as in the moral department of education, PESTALOZZI was most anxious to put an end to the exclusive dominion of *words*. This must long since have been destroyed by an appeal to common sense, had not the principle of education been almost constantly sacrificed to inferior and erro-

neous considerations. The question with most teachers commonly is,—What is this child expected to know, if it shall do credit to my instruction? The primary considerations then are,—prejudice, in every shape; prejudice of fashion,—of fastidious refinement—or of unintellectual vulgarity—or of literary pedantry;—the wishes of parents and guardians—and, above all, the convenience and self-interest of teachers. Thus the interest of the only individual who is to be benefitted by education—the interest of the child—is the only one that is never consulted.

PESTALOZZI maintains, that every plan of education ought to be based on a consideration of the nature of the child.

By the term, “the nature of the child,” PESTALOZZI means, the child with all his *innate faculties*, of which the lowest range contiguous to animal existence, and characterise him, though “the paragon of animals,” the *temporary inhabitant of this earth*; of which the intermediate ones, with a variety of perceptions, of discursive thought, of transient affection, and energies and talents, constitute him a *member of society*, whether he may toil in its humbler walks, or sit at the helm of affairs,—or shine in art, or science, or literature; but of which others speak of an higher, and indeed the highest origin—which enable him

to read the riddle of life—which bear up his courage, and raise his spirit above its vicissitudes—which teach him how to steer his bark, to weather the gale, and point to the cynosure that may guide him “*to the haven where we would be.*”

Having thus laid down an analysis of the different faculties of human nature, PESTALOZZI proceeds to observe that in developing them (which is the business of education) it should be remembered, that their germs are in existence in the child, and that only when brought into play in their natural connection with each other, they form, as they ought to do, *an organic whole*; that in every individual they appear under certain modifications, which render it necessary that the strictest attention should be paid to the *shades of individual character and talent*; that in different stages of developement they require a *different and seasonable treatment*; that what is commonly called instruction is no more than the *means applied to develope and exercise these faculties*; that the application of these means ought *to keep pace with the state of the faculties* for which they are calculated; that in administering these means, *the ultimate end of existence*, for which those faculties are implanted in human nature, *ought to be constantly kept in view*; and that the developement of any one of them, or the

perfection in any one branch of instruction, is valuable only in proportion as it *bears upon that end*.

Upon these principles PESTALOZZI has founded a new system of instruction. His own first efforts at Neuhof, and at Stanz, were, of course, imperfect, and he has been the first to acknowledge it. The school at Stanz had not subsisted a twelvemonth, when he was compelled to give it up, the Canton being again transformed into a scene of war, and Stanz being in the power of the Austrians. PESTALOZZI went to Burgdorf, and proceeded there to carry his ideas into execution. He was now fortunate enough to attract the attention of men, who were qualified by natural talent, more than by acquired knowledge, and, more than both, by a sincere wish for a better system, to assist him. In union with them, a variety of plans were devised for facilitating the elements of instruction, and adapting them to the faculties of children at an early age. If some of these plans partook of the nature and the foibles of experiments, this was then the only way to arrive at their aim, and might be excused by the consideration, that "nothing new can be done except in a new manner."

But at Burgdorf his labours were again interrupted. By his "Leonard and Gertrude;" by a series of observations which he published, "On the Necessary Improvements in the Legislation of the Helvetian

Republic;" and by his unremitting disinterested efforts he had so fully established his claims to the name of a true patriot, that he was chosen by the people one of the deputies whom they sent to Buonaparte, then First Consul, (in 1802.)

On his return home, he resumed his occupations. In 1804, his institution was transferred to München Buchsee, in the neighbourhood of the well-known establishment of Fellenberg at Hofwyl. But a more appropriate *locale* having become desirable, the government of the Canton de Vaud invited him to take his residence for his life in one of seven spacious chateaux in the Canton, of which they left him the choice. He determined on that of Yverdun, where his own establishment was transferred, and where some years after, similar institutions were founded on his plan. In the mean time, the eyes of the most intelligent part of the public in Switzerland and Germany were directed on his endeavours; commissions were appointed and sent to Yverdun, by different foreign governments, to inquire into the merits of the new system. Some of the reports were published, and contributed in rendering both Pestalozzi's plans and his institution conspicuous.* Numerous pupils were

* Among these reports the first place is due to a work which contains one of the best exposés now extant of PESTALOZZI's views, by Jullien

sent to Yverdon, from England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and even from Spain, where the system was for some time intended to be introduced into all the public schools.

The most animated discussions of the merits of the new system took place in Germany. The press was teeming with productions, some of them attacking its utility, but the great majority espousing its cause; with accounts of travellers of what they had seen practised at Yverdon, and with essays by independent thinkers, on what they conceived ought to be practised. The great advantages resulting from general discussion were not lost upon the system. PESTALOZZI and his friends were continually intent on imparting to their ideas an higher degree of perfection, on developing them in the most luminous manner, and giving uncontrovertible evidence of their practical utility. In this they succeeded as far as the general tenor of them went, to the full satisfaction of many of their former

of Paris, whose name has long been honourably connected with the cause of every liberal and philanthropic undertaking. It was published in 1812, at Milan, under the title,—*Esprit de la Méthode d'éducation de PESTALOZZI*, 2 vol. 8vo. Another well-written essay, which is the work of intimate acquaintance with PESTALOZZI's system, has been published by the Rev. D. A. Chavannes :—*Exposé de la Méthode de PESTALOZZI*." Paris. Levrault Schoell. 1805.

antagonists. Men of the highest distinction in science and literature thought it not beneath themselves to give their votes, after close examination, in favour of their principles, and to suggest improvements to the plans for their execution.

The great desideratum, which was now the centre of the joint efforts of a numerous body of men, was, a complete arrangement of elementary knowledge, to be brought before the pupils in the order which the nature of their faculties required. All parties were agreed, that the first steps towards instruction, as well as education in general, were obviously belonging to the department of mothers, and that every thinking mother would claim this as a privilege rather than consider it as an imposition. Accordingly, specimens of the simplest exercises were drawn up, as they came under the different heads of language, form, and number, such as every mother would by experience find appropriate, and as the philosopher, from an analysis, which is the most difficult, though the most necessary, of the simplest truths, would approve of, and as they might be practised with advantage in every Infant School.*

* The friends of infant schools will be pleased to hear, that while the above was going through the press, a prospectus and circular have been

In these infant exercises, it is obvious, that the first object of knowledge should be no other than the child himself; and first of all, the physical nature of the child—namely, the principal parts of the body, the general use of the limbs, and the senses. But while the names are supplied, and the attention is thus drawn towards them, exercises ought to accompany the knowledge, and to give it at once a practical character, by rendering the senses active and alert; accustoming the eye to distinguish colours, and the ear sounds; and by strengthening and diversifying the different movements of the body. This introduces infant gymnastics—a playful art, but which, if at a following period of youth it is made to keep pace with the developement of the mental energies and the formation of character, is well fitted to co-operate in the task,

“To build up men against the future times.”

The senses, of course, as the connecting medium,

received from Paris, in which a committee of ladies publish the first annual report of a flourishing Infant School, of upwards of 80 children, 113, Rue du Bac, and invite the public to the foundation of similar institutions. A curious fact has also been elicited by the late public discussion of the subject in Germany, namely, that an Infant School has existed at Lippe Detmold, in Saxony, ever since the year 1802.

lead to a consideration of the things of the material world, beginning by those which are nearest and stand in the most immediate relation to the child. Here, while language has to furnish their names, observation has to point out their qualities, and experience, assisted by instruction, to teach their use and nature. This leads a step higher; discrimination has to distinguish between sentient and insentient, rational and irrational objects; and the very faculties which constitute reason, are at once called into play, and proposed as an object of observation and of exercise. The qualities of material objects, too, are analysed, and, by decomposing them into their parts, the elements of form and number are pointed out, and a geometrical and arithmetical primer illustrates their various combinations. But the material world, and the lessons which it teaches, are not to arrest the attention of the child exclusively; the relation in which the child stands to those of his own species, beginning with the first and most endearing of the family circle, awake a train of new ideas; feelings which had either been slumbering, or acting only instinctively, become objects of consciousness; and the highest truths, and feelings, and duties, to which man is to be alive, are adumbrated in conformity with that religious spirit which ought to preside over infant education.

On most of these subjects, hints will be found in the little work to which these pages are to serve as an introduction. For a more distinct and detailed account of them, as also for a comprehensive view of the plans which have been adopted for instruction in all those branches of knowledge which are required for any career in life, these pages can only contain a general reference to the works of PESTALOZZI, and his friends; and to the institutions which, in different countries, are conducted upon their plans. As far as regards the former, may the writer of these lines be allowed to express a wish (and he might, perhaps, allude to a *hope*), that at no distant period, those who are more competent, in every respect, than he feels himself, to the task, may lay before the friends of education in this country the substance of what has been proposed, and discussed, and executed, and that its character may more and more be illustrated by *practical experience*.

And here the writer of this Memoir will be expected to resume the narrative, and bring it to a close. And he would willingly do so, had he to speak of old age rewarded as a life of uncommon vicissitudes and activity might have deserved to be,—by retirement spent in ease, and leisure enjoyed with dignity. But it is an ungrateful task to commemorate trifling events,

which proved the source of protracted mortification. It appears that one of the misfortunes incident on old age, is the facility with which at the same time caution may be supplanted, and the seeds of suspicion sown. Add to which, a mind, absorbed in one leading idea, rich in affection, forgetful not only of self-interest, but lacking also that discretion, which would compass efficient means to the execution of a generous plan—a mind powerful to command esteem, and to engender sympathy, but less conspicuous for that which the vulgar “would fain call master,”—a mind habituated to penetrate deep into the ore of the philosophy of human nature, and ready to devise ingenious plans for improvement, but utterly unequal to the management, in all its details, of an extensive establishment; and it will no longer be matter of surprise, that circumstances should have occurred, which at length rendered the continuation of PESTALOZZI’S institution next to impossible. The consequence most painful to PESTALOZZI’S feelings, was the failure of a favourite plan, which he had long entertained, of establishing, separately from the school at Yverdun, which was chiefly composed of pupils of the higher class, another institution exclusively for the children of the poor, among whom the most talented

were to be educated as instructors and governesses on the new plan.

PESTALOZZI retired to his own Neuhof, to complete the work which it was still in his power to accomplish,—the corrected and augmented edition of his writings. Intent on this task, still inspired by the idea, which alone survived the blasting of his hopes, and the wreck of his affairs, he concluded his days on the 17th of February 1827.

That the circumstances which prevented his final success, were entirely unconnected with the merit or demerit of his system, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that other institutions conducted on his plan, not only in several parts of Switzerland (and among them one at Yverdon), but dispersed through different countries, are still going on, uninterrupted in increasing prosperity; and that his ideas have been gaining support in the same measure as the old system was giving way to an impartial trial and to the progress of experience and independent thought. And with his name recollections are and shall continue to be indissolubly allied, which speak of high genius, and of the still higher dignity of character,—of one who “*was a man*, take him for all in all,” and connected with these associations, regret at the painful idea, that we shall not “look upon his like again.”

Let it be recollected, also, that PESTALOZZI stands not singular as one, who has aspired to the accomplishment of plans of general utility, of which he was not to see the fruits, or enjoy the full credit of their success. Whether it be to evince that, in order to achieve results of the widest extent, a confidence, and an energy of self-devotion is requisite, which does not shrink from any sacrifice to redeem a pledge given to humanity ; or to teach us that the spirit of truth, which presides over the progressive developement of momentous ideas, chuses an individual for its instrument only, and that the mould may be broken, and the instrument destroyed, when Truth itself has gained sufficient strength to make its way, and to breathe its life into new organs ;—but, at this day, History speaks loud enough to the fact, that the progress of ideas, though apparently linked to it, is yet independent of the success, and superior to the adversities of individuals. So let it be with those truths, if indeed truths they be, which it has fallen to the lot of PESTALOZZI to proclaim.

In the mean time, all that those who have a well-founded conviction of their character as truths, would claim in their favour, is, a candid examination of their fundamental principles, not by the standard of any peculiar system of philosophy, but by an independent

analysis of human nature, and by the all-convincing test of solid experience. For both, they have reason to consider the present a suitable moment. The persuasion, that "something is rotten" in the systems of the day, or rather of the days that are gone by, is gaining ground among the most enlightened part of the public. Prejudice, and the still more powerful bias of *paltry interests*, which plead in its favour, are not now strong enough to delay the slow, but solid preparations for impartial enquiry, and for effective improvement. Temporizing philosophy may, indeed, administer palliatives for a while; but there is a pledge in the spirit, and on every page of history, that Truth must eventually prevail; and it will be for those, to whose persuasions it comes home, and whose hearts respond to its call, to assist in redeeming it.

It may not be amiss to say two words on the claims of novelty on the part of PESTALOZZI's system. It is obvious that ideas, which profess to be founded on the rightly understood and unalterable principles of human nature, must not lay claim to novelty, any farther than regards the merit of their combination and execution. Keeping this in view, it may not be inconsistent in the friends of PESTALOZZI, with the acknowledgments due to the merits of those who have before him engaged in a similar cause, to apply to him

a sentence which has been pronounced on another occasion, by one of the ablest critics of the age. Without going the length of maintaining, that "that man is not the discoverer of any art, who first says the thing," they might at least insist, that the principal merit is due to him, "who says it so long, so loud, and so clearly, that he *compels mankind to hear him*;—the man who is so deeply impressed with the importance of the discovery, that he will take no denial, but, *at the risk of fortune and fame*, pushes through all opposition, and is determined that what he thinks he has discovered *shall not perish for want of a fair trial*.*"

In concluding this rapid sketch, the writer of these lines is fully conscious of the peculiar situation in which he finds himself placed. He has ventured to claim a share of public attention in favour of ideas, of which he has been giving but too faint an outline—writing in a language not his own, and within limits, and—why should he not be the first to confess it?—with abilities little adequate to the task. Of his motives in bringing out this publication, he declines making mention. He deems it folly in a writer to take up the time of his readers by a recital of individual

* The Edinburgh Review, No. LXXXVII.

motives. If he is conscious of having deserved credit for the truth of his professions, they are useless ; if not, it is very right, that professions should go for nothing.

But if he shall prove to have said little that was new to those already interested in the subject, and still less that was interesting to those to whom it is new ; he would yet solicit the attention of **MOTHERS** to the truths laid down in the following sheets. To the **MOTHERS** he would pre-eminently inscribe this little volume ; and, next to them, with great diffidence in his own power to do justice to them, but with full confidence in the intrinsic truth of the sentiments of his author, he would inscribe it to **THE FRIENDS OF POPULAR EDUCATION.**

LETTERS.

"Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and Nature, and your feelings too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to YOU?"

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

YVERDUN, Oct. 1, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

YOU require of me to point out to you, in a series of letters, my views concerning the development of the infant mind.

I am happy to see that you acknowledge the importance of education in the earliest stage of life: a fact that has almost universally been overlooked. The philanthropic efforts, both of a former age, and of our own, have been directed in general to the improvement of Schools, and their various modes of instruction. It will not be expected that I should say any thing tending to depreciate such endeavours: the greater part of my life has been devoted to the arduous aim at their combination; and the results and acknowledgments I have obtained, are such as to convince me that my labour has not been in vain. But I can assure you, my dear friend, from the experience of more than half a century, and from the most intimate conviction of my heart, founded upon this experience, that I should not

consider our task as being half accomplished, I should not anticipate half the consequences for the real benefit of mankind, as long as our system of improvement failed of extending to the earliest stage of education : and to succeed in this, we require the most powerful ally of our cause, as far as human power may contribute to an end which eternal love and wisdom have assigned to the endeavours of man. It is on this altar that we shall lay down the sacrifice of all our efforts ; and if our gift is to be accepted, it must be conveyed through the medium of *maternal love*.

Yes ! my dear friend, this object of our ardent desires will never be attained but through the assistance of *the mothers*. To them we must appeal ; with them we must pray for the blessing of Heaven ; in them try to awaken a deep sense of all the consequences, of all the self-denials, and of all the rewards attached to their interesting duties. Let each take an active part in that most important sphere of influence. Such is the aspiration of an aged man, who is anxious to secure whatever good he may have been allowed to promote or to conceive. Your heart will unite with his : I feel it will. I shake hands with you, as with one who fervently embraces this cause—not my cause, nor that of any other mortal,—but the cause of Him, who would have the children of his creation, and of his providence, led to himself in the ways of love.

Happy should I be, if I might one day speak through your voice to the *mothers of Great Britain*. How does my glowing heart expand at the opening prospect which has this moment filled my imagination ! To behold a great and mighty nation, known of old to appreciate with

equal skill the glory of powerful enterprize, and the silent joys of domestic life, intent upon the welfare of the rising generation; establishing the honour and happiness of those who shall one day stand in their place; securing to their country her glory and her liberty, by a moral elevation of her children! And shall *not the heart of a mother bound in the consciousness that she too is to have her share in this immortal work?**

* This was written in 1818. Pestalozzi's hopes have not been disappointed: the simple but evident fact which pleads for their importance, is the establishment and progress of INFANT SCHOOLS.

LETTER II.

OCTOBER 3, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

OUR great object is the development of the infant mind,—and our great means, the agency of mothers.

A most important question then presents itself at the very outset of our inquiries. Has the mother the qualifications requisite for the duties and exercises we would impose on her?

I feel myself bound to enter into this question, and to give it, if possible, an answer fully decisive, requesting your attention to the subject, as I feel persuaded, that if my views coincide with your own, you will agree with the reasoning founded on my statement.

Yes! I would say, the mother is qualified, and qualified by her Creator himself, to become the principal agent in the development of her child. The most ardent desire for its good is already implanted in her heart; and what power can be more influential, more stimulative, than *maternal love*?—the most gentle, and, at the same time, the most intrepid power in the whole system of nature. Yes: the mother is qualified, for Providence has also gifted her with the faculties required for her task. And here I feel it necessary to explain what is the task I refer to as peculiarly hers. It is not any thing beyond her reach I would demand,—it is not a certain

degree or description of knowledge, usually implied in what is vulgarly called a *finished* education, though, if she happen to possess such knowledge, the day will come for opening her treasury, and giving to her children what she may choose: but at the period we speak of, all the knowledge acquired in the most accomplished education, would not facilitate her task; for what I would demand of her is only—A THINKING LOVE.

Love, of course, I presume to be the first requisite, and that which will always present itself,—only modified, perhaps, under various forms. All I would request of a mother, would be, to let her love act as strongly as it may, but to season it, in the exercise, with thought.

And I should indeed entreat a mother, by the very love which she bears to her children, to bestow a moment of calm reflection on the nature of her duties. I do not mean to lead her into an artificial discussion; maternal love might be lost in the maze of philosophical investigation. But there is that in her feelings, which, in a shorter way, by a more direct process, may lead her to truth. To this I would appeal. Let it not be concealed from her, that her duties are both easy and difficult; but I hope there is no mother that has not found the highest reward in overcoming impediments in such a cause: and the whole of her duties will gradually open before her, if she will but dwell upon that simple, yet awful and elevating idea, “My children are born for eternity, and confided expressly to me, that I may educate them for being children of God.”

“Mother!” I would say to her, “responsible mother! look around thee! what diversity of pursuits, what variety of calling! some agitated in the turmoil of a

restless life ; others courting repose in the bosom of retirement. Of all the different actors that surround thee, whose vocation appears most sacred, most solemn, most holy ? ‘Doubtless his, thou art ready to exclaim, whose life is dedicated to the spiritual elevation of human nature. How happy must he be, whose calling it is to lead others to happiness, and happiness everlasting.’ Well ! happy mother ! his calling is thine. Shrink not at the idea,—tremble not at the comparison. Think not I arrogate for thee a station beyond thy deserts,—fear not lest temptations to vanity lie hid in my suggestion,—but raise thy heart in gratitude to Him who has entrusted thee with so high a province,—try to render thyself worthy of the confidence reposed in thee. Talk not of deficiencies in thy knowledge,—love shall supply them ;—of limitation in thy means,—Providence shall enlarge them ;—of weakness in thy energies,—the Spirit of Power himself shall strengthen them :—look to that Spirit for all that thou dost want, and especially for those two grand, pre-eminent requisites, *courage* and *humility*.”

LETTER III.

OCTOBER 7, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

EVERY mother who is aware of the importance of her task, will, I presume, be ready to devote to it all her zeal. She will think it indispensable to attain a clear view of the end for which she is to educate her children.

I have pointed out this end in my last letter. But much remains to be said on the means to be employed in the first stage of education.

A child is a being endowed with all the faculties of human nature, but none of them developed: *a bud not yet opened*. When the bud uncloses, every one of the leaves unfolds, not one remains behind. Such must be the process of education.

No faculty in human nature but must be treated with the same attention; for their co-agency alone can ensure their success.

But how shall the mother learn to distinguish and to direct each faculty, before it appears in a state of development sufficient to give a token of its own existence?

Not indeed from books, but from actual observation.

I would ask every mother, who has observed her child with no other end but merely to watch over its

safety, whether she has not remarked, even in the first era of life, the progressive advancement of the faculties?

The first exertions of the child, attended with some pain, have yet enough of pleasure to induce a repetition gradually increasing in frequency and power; and when their first efforts, blind efforts as it were, are once over, the little hand begins to play its more perfect part. From the first movement of this hand, from the first grasp which avails itself of a plaything, how infinite is the series of actions of which it will be the instrument! not only employing itself in every thing connected with the habits and comforts of life, but astonishing the world, perhaps, with some masterpiece of art, or seizing, ere they escape, the fleeting inspirations of genius, and handing them down to the admiration of posterity.

The first exertion of this little hand, then, opens an immense field to a faculty which now begins to manifest itself.

In the next place, the attention of the child is now visibly excited, and fixed by a great variety of external impressions: the eye and the ear are attracted wherever a lively colour, or a rousing animating sound, may strike them, and they turn, as if to inquire the cause of that sudden impression. Very soon the features of the child, and its redoubled attention, will betray the pleasure with which the senses are affected, by the brilliant colours of a flower, or the pleasing sounds of music. Apparently the first traces are now making of that mental activity which will hereafter employ itself in the numberless observations, and combinations of events, or in the search of their hidden causes, and

which will be accessible to all the pleasing or painful sensations which life, in its various shapes, may excite.

Every mother will recollect the delight of her feelings on the first tokens of her infant's consciousness and rationality; indeed, maternal love knows not a higher joy than that arising from those interesting indications. Trifling to another, to her they are of infinite value. To her they reveal an eventful futurity; they tell her the important story, that a spiritual being, dearer to her than life, is opening, as it were, the eye of intelligence, and saying, in its silent, but tender and expressive language, "I am born for immortality."

But the last and highest joy, the triumph of maternal love, remains yet to be spoken of. It is the look of the child, to the eye of the mother,—that look so full of love, so full of *heart*, which speaks most emphatically of its elevation in the scale of being. It is now a subject for the best gift bestowed on human nature. The voice of conscience will speak within its breast; religion will assist its trembling steps, and raise its eye to Heaven. With these convictions the heart of the mother expands with delight and solicitude: she again hails in her offspring, not merely the citizen of earth: "Thou art born," she cries, "for immortality, and an immortality of happiness: such is the promise of thy heaven-derived faculties; such shall be the consummation of thy Heavenly Father's love."

These then are the first traces of human nature unfolding in the infantine state. The philosopher may take them as facts constituting an object of study: he may use them

as the basis of a system; but they are originally designed for the mother,—they are a hint from above, intended at once as her blessing and encouragement

“For all her sorrows, all her cares,
An over-payment of delight!”

LETTER IV.

October 18, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

WHEN a mother has observed in her child the first traces of development, a new question suggests itself,—*How shall these expanding faculties be directed?* which of them call for the most diligent attention, and which may follow their natural course without requiring any peculiar care bestowed on their growth and regulation? which, too, have the most important bearing on the future welfare of the child?

The last question, I suppose, will be decided unanimously in favour of the heart. I cannot suppose that any mother is so morally and intellectually blind, as consciously to decide on providing for the external and temporal benefit of her child, at the expence of his inward and eternal well-being. But she may nevertheless be puzzled as to the relative importance of the faculties under her charge, and the consequent proportion of attention they separately demand.

The heart has, indeed, a pre-eminent claim on her attention. But is not the child directed and admonished by the voice of conscience within? Is he not able to decide the great question of right and wrong, merely by listening to this voice, without any particular instruc-

tion from another? And will not the time arrive, when he becomes receptive of the truths of Religion, to confirm that voice within, and to give him that moral elevation, the very idea of which is at present so far beyond his reach?

It would not be difficult to answer these questions, and to put the whole subject in its true light. But I would not offer to a mother any detailed plan for her guidance, considering it as highly essential that she should feel herself untrammelled by any thing like system, the principles of which, not being her own, might only prejudice and confine her opinions and practice, without convincing her of any fitness or adaptation in the given means, to the end proposed. Why should her mind be merely the reflection of another's, whose views, perhaps, she can neither fathom nor appreciate? Is she not a mother? and has her Creator, in furnishing her with the springs of natural life for his children, left her unqualified for administering to that spiritual life which is the very end and essence of all being? Is her relation to humanity of so responsible a character, and shall not her intelligence and energy be concentrated in this one focus? Shall not her whole existence be absorbed in the exalted purpose, the unwearying effort, to accomplish the end of her creation? Nature, benevolence, religion, all demand it! and so unanimously, as to set the question for ever at rest.

I would intreat of every mother to take a general survey of life in all its varieties of aspect; and wherever happiness presents itself, not merely in semblance, but in substance, then to pause, and examine, if pos-

sible, how that happiness is constituted, and whence it originates.

It is more than probable, that she will feel rather dissatisfied with the results of her first investigation ; she will find it almost impossible, amidst such distracting multiplicity of pursuits, and of characters, to select any specimens on which her eye might repose as it were from the scrutinizing search, and gather light truly illustrative of the subject. She would fain withdraw her contemplation from this scene of confusion, and direct them again into their former channel, to dwell with unmingled delight on that being so dear to her affections.

But the dearer your child is to you, fond mother ! the more urgently would I insist on your examining that life into which he will one day be thrown. Do you find it replete with danger ? You must encompass him with a shield that shall preserve his innocence. Do you find it a maze of error ? You must show him that magic clue which shall lead to the fountain of truth. Do you find it lifeless, and dead, under all its busy superficies ? You must try to nourish in him that spirit of activity which shall keep his powers alive, and impel him forwards to improve, though all around him should be lost in the habitual mechanism of a stationary idleness. Again, therefore, enquire what may be the experience life can afford you ? Look for a moment at those who have distinguished themselves from the rest of their species. Surely you would not wish your child to be one of the many, of whom nothing can be said, but that they lived and died, passing through life ingloriously, and uncharacterized by any quality, or

any action than can dignify humanity. Your child can be in no class of society where the most honourable distinction is not attainable. The fertile spreading tree, however low may be the valley it grows in, is not the less welcome to the way-worn traveller, who hails its luscious fruits and grateful shades.

Even among the inferior stations, you will find many who have really distinguished themselves by the industry and energy displayed in their employment, however little may be its intrinsic dignity; but their skill and perseverance have gained, and secured to them, the attention, and perhaps respect, of their neighbours and superiors.

Others will arrest your observation, placed in the more exalted ranks of society, whose amazing grasp of intelligence will appear to you as almost supernatural. You may occasionally remark it compassing extraordinary ends, with ordinary and even limited means; directing with facility the helm of national power, or over-ruling the decisions of national wisdom, or stemming the currents of national policy; and in these, or any other varieties of its character and action, you will have to admire the triumphs of mind.

These prominent actors on the stage of life are to a great number, whose destiny seems to be in their power, objects of terror: but you will scarcely find any one disposed to withhold the tribute of admiration due to their lofty endowments. As their persons are regarded with *respect*, or possibly with *fear*, by others of their kind, so you will meet with many an individual who inspires his observers and acquaintance with no other

sentiment than love: his natural goodness of disposition, and his unvarying kindness of intention, will never fail of producing this appropriate effect: being every man's well-wisher, he has gained the secret of access to every man's affections.

Your own acquaintance will furnish you with the original of at least one individual in each of these three classes.

Are they all happy, or any one superlatively so?

LETTER V.

October 24, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I DO not mean to anticipate the answer of the mother. But it is highly probable, that her enquiries will terminate in the sad conviction, that none of the individuals in question seem to be invested with that happiness, true, essential, and undisturbed, which she so ardently aspires after as the future portion of her child.

Here, then, she will sigh over the imperfections of human nature, the inconsistencies of human pursuits. Is it possible, she will exclaim, that with all this fertility of genius, all this comprehension of mind, all these charities of heart, happiness should still be unattained?

Now this is precisely the point to which I would bring her.

“*How is it possible?*” is a phrase so common with us, that we quite forget its original meaning. It is a question, but we never fail to evade its legitimate answer. It is a question to ourselves, but we consciously shrink back from the task of meeting it with a fair and open reply. Let it be otherwise in the present instance. Let the mother go on to examine the nature of this possibility, and she will soon be sensible of her approximation to the truth she is in search of. She

must be aware, that mere executive talent, however splendid; mere mental capacity, however vast; mere good nature, however diffusive, are still endowments infinitely inferior to the conditions of human happiness. And here I am about to allude to a fundamental error which prevails in education, as well as in our judgment of men and things.

What, I would ask, can be the true, intrinsic use of the utmost possible exertions, unless regulated by accuracy of ideas, elevated and universal perceptions, and, above all, under the control of, and founded on the noblest sentiments of the heart, a firm and steady will? And again, I ask, what can be the real use and merit of schemes, however deep or ingenious, if the energy of exertion be not equal to the boldness and skill of the conception, or even if the two powers are combined, but are not working for an end worthy of themselves, and propitious to humanity? It is obvious then, that a mere cultivation of the talents of our animal and intellectual nature will be found absolutely inefficient as a substitute for the heart.

This, then, will appear to be the true basis of human happiness. But I must even here warn you against a possible mistake, by pointing out the features of a character likely to mislead you, and which is so often met with in our passage through life, that none of us shall dispute the existence of an original. I refer to one, whose mind is pregnant with good intentions, his heart overflowing with amiable dispositions, and his zeal ever ready to patronize and promote any worthy enterprize, that has for its object the benefit of society. I need not name to you all the admirable points of such

a character; so much kindness, benevolence, and warmth, cannot fail of seeming to you irresistibly attractive. And yet it is a fact, but too often confirmed by experience, that all this constellation of excellencies may glow and sparkle in vain; that such a temperament, however finely constituted, may yet live and move to little purpose, in reference to others, and to itself fail of securing that happiness which is asserted to be the inseparable concomitant of virtue.

The reason is evident: the heart, the grand wheel in the human mechanism, may have been long and actively at work, but for want of being connected in due time with those other powers of human nature, whose co-operation is equally essential, it has failed of producing that health and vitality which would otherwise have pervaded the system. The faculties of man must be so cultivated that no one shall predominate at the expence of another, but each be excited to the true standard of activity; *and this standard is the spiritual nature of man.*

And here allow me to expatiate again on the principal result of these important truths; again to touch upon them in order to the character I am addressing.

“Happy mother! thou art delighting thyself in the first efforts of thy child, and they are delightful; muse upon them, pass them not by,—they are the germs of future action, they are all-important to thee and to him, and should furnish thee with many a long train of prolific thought.

“God has given to thy child all the faculties of our nature; but the grand point remains yet undecided! How shall this heart, this head, these hands, be

employed? to whose service shall they be dedicated? A query, the answer to which involves a futurity of happiness, or unhappiness, to the life so dear to thee.

“God has given thy child a spiritual nature; that is to say, He has implanted in him the voice of conscience; and He has done more,—He has given him the faculty of attending to this voice. He has given him an eye, whose natural turn is heavenward; teaching thee, in this alone, the elevation of his destiny; and disclaiming for him all affinity to the inferior creatures, whose downward looks speak as expressively of the earth whither they are tending.

“Thy child, then, was created, not for earth, but for heaven. Dost thou know the way that leads thither? Thy child would never find it, nor would any other mortal be able to lead the way, if divine mercy did not reveal it to him. But it is not enough to know this way; thy child must learn to walk in it.

“It is recorded, thou knowest, that God opened the heavens to one of the patriarchs of old, and showed him a ladder leading to their azure heights! Well, this ladder is let down to every descendant of Adam; it is tendered to thy child. But he must be taught to climb it. And let him take heed not to attempt it, nor think to scale it, by cold calculations of the head,—nor be compelled to adventure it by the mere impulse of the heart:—but let all these powers combine, and the noble enterprize will be crowned with success.

“All these powers are already bestowed on him:

but thine is the province to assist in calling them forth. Let the ladder leading to heaven be constantly before thine eyes, even the ladder of *Faith*, on which thou mayest behold ascending and descending the angels of *Hope* and *Love*."

LETTER VI.

OCTOBER 31, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

HAD I been more anxious, on some former occasions, to suit my words to the taste of the one, and to the theories of others, I might perhaps have secured the approbation of those who are at present inclined to put upon my principles a less favourable construction, or to reject them altogether. But I have not been taught to refer to systems for the proof of what experience suggested, or practice confirmed to me. If it has been my lot, as I humbly hope that it was, to light upon truths little noticed before, and principles which, though almost generally acknowledged, were yet seldom practised, I confess that I was little qualified for that task by the precision of my philosophical notions, but supported rather by a rich stock of experience, and guided by the impulse of my heart. If, therefore, I am frequently recurring to an appeal to the feelings of a mother, you will easily conceive that, while I would court the examination of my principles, by those who are qualified for it by intellectual superiority, I would yet look for sympathy chiefly to those whose exertions are kindred to mine,—being sprung from the same feelings, and directed to the same end.

Let me then proceed to lay before you my views, not indeed with the elaborate accuracy that might satisfy the criticism of a stranger, but with the warmth that may speak to the *heart* of a *friend*.

I would, in the first place, direct your attention to the existence, and the early manifestation, of a spiritual principle, even in the infant mind. I would put it in the strongest light, that there is in the child an active power of faith and love; the two principles by which, under the divine guidance, our nature is made to participate of the highest blessings that are in store for us. And this power is not, as other faculties are, in a dormant state, in the infant mind. While all other faculties, whether mental or physical, present the image of utter helplessness, of a weakness, which, in its first attempts at exertion, only leads to pain and disappointment, that same power of faith and love displays an energy, an intensity, which is never surpassed by its most successful efforts, when in full growth.

I am fully aware, that what I have called, just now, a principle of faith and love in the infant, is frequently, and indeed generally, degraded by the name of a merely animal or instinctive feeling. But I confess, that I look upon the instinctive agency of the infant, on its first stage of existence, as the wonderful dispensation of a benign and all-wise Providence. In this wise, and, I repeat it, wonderful dispensation, we may indeed admire, with feelings of veneration, the free gift of the Creator to man—a gift which, however man may pervert it, is yet, in its primitive agency, an incalculable blessing. And if the feeling I am

alluding to, be called animal, I confess, that such appears to have been the intention of the Creator, that however low the first state of human existence might rank, it might yet adumbrate, in its primitive forms, the successive development of its spiritual nature.

This principle, however, for the existence of which I contend, is by no means absolutely ripened and purified in the child. If it were to remain among the inferior faculties it would fail of acting as a constant preservative of faith and love. It must, therefore, derive its nourishment and increase from nature: it must be cherished by the sacred power of innocence and truth. This must constitute the atmosphere in which the child is living.

This daily nourishment of the child's love and faith, will, in time, unfold all the germs of the purest virtues. The infant is obedient, active, patient,—I should almost have said, wise and pious, before it has been taught to understand the nature or merit of these virtues. The highest and strongest power of spiritual elevation, of which the soul of man is capable under the influence of the divine doctrine of Christ, is communicated to the child in tender infancy, by a kind of revelation. It has a foretaste of the most sublime virtues, the power of which it is not yet able to conceive.

Thus the true dignity of Christianity may be said to be implanted in the child before it has an idea of the full growth of its yet tender germs in its breast. The sacred feeling of gratitude is active in the child in the moment of gratification, when it feels its animal life appeased, and its animal wants supplied. The sacred power of sympathy, which is superior to the fear of danger and

death, is active in the child : it would die on the arms of the mother, to relieve her from imminent pain, the feeling of which is strongly marked on her features,—it would die for her, before it could conceive what is sympathy, or death. In the child, there is even an antepast of the feeling of tranquillity and delight, which is the reward of a resignation of our own desires, of a subordination of all our hopes and wishes, under the supreme and ruling principles of love and faith.

This act of resignation, trifling as may be its immediate object, is the first step towards the conscious and principled exercise of self-denial.

On the arms of the mother, the infant is actuated, and as it were inspired by this principle, which may become its second nature, while the mind is yet far from a consciousness of that power, which, in its further development, may produce the most glorious efforts of self-denial.

LETTER VII.

NOVEMBER 8, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I HAVE in my last letter stated it as my firm conviction, that there is in the infant a principle which may, under the divine guidance, enable him not only to stand distinguished among his fellow-men, but also to fulfil the highest command of his Maker, to walk in the light of faith, and to have his heart overflowing with that love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,"—the love which "never faileth."

I have called this principle, even as it is manifested in the earliest stage of human life, a principle of love and faith. I am aware that these terms will meet with contradiction by some, and perhaps with derision by others. I should feel truly obliged to any one who would give me two other terms more appropriate,—more expressive of the idea that I have formed on the subject, after the closest and most earnest observation of many years. In the mean time, may I venture at least to hope, that no one will deny the fact, merely on account of the insufficiency of the terms which I may have had the misfortune to apply to the description of it.

I shall try to explain my idea in a manner which will scarcely leave a doubt on the nature of the fact, to which it is my wish to call the attention of all persons engaged in education. They will be ready to admit, from past experience, that if you treat a child with kindness, there is a greater chance of succeeding, than if you try by any other means.

Now this is all that I would wish to have granted to me; and on this simple and undeniable fact I would ground whatever there is of theory, or of principle, in my views on infant development.

If you succeed, by KINDNESS, more than by any other means, there must, I would say, be a something in the child, that answers as it were to your call of kindness. Kindness must be the most congenial to his nature: kindness must excite a sympathy in his heart. Whence is that something derived? I have no hesitation in saying, from the Giver of all that is good. It is indeed to that same principle in man, that He has always addressed his call, both by the voice of conscience, and whenever he has, by his infinite mercy, spoken to mankind, "at sundry times, and in divers manners." And, if otherwise, how are we to satisfy ourselves with regard to the meaning of the Divine authority, by which it is said, that "of such is the kingdom of God;" and that, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."

We shall have the more reason to think so, if we consider the manner in which that power of kindness acts upon even the infant mind.

If the infant were not actuated by any other impulse

but the mere instinct of self-preservation; if his attachment to the mother were grounded merely upon a consciousness of his helplessness, of his animal wants, and the observation that she was the first to relieve, to protect, to gratify them; if thence spring his smile, and all the little tokens of affection so dear to the mother's heart; if the infant be really that selfish, calculating creature, turning to the gratification of his own desires the affection of others; then indeed would I cease for ever to speak of the stamina of love in his heart, or of the antepast, however distant, of faith. Then would I cease for ever to address the mother as the principal agent in the cause of humanity. Such a cause then could no longer exist. Then I would no longer exhort her to weigh her duty, and to consider the means by which to accomplish it. Any means would do for what would then be her province,—to nurture up in her infant that same cold and unnatural selfishness, which might be lurking in her own bosom, under the deceitful mask of maternal love.

But let the mother tell what her heart says to such a doctrine. Let her tell, if she does not believe that God himself has implanted in her that feeling of maternal love. Let her tell, if she does not feel herself nearest to God in those moments in which her love is most intense and active; and if it is not this feeling, which alone enables her to be unremitting in her duties, and to undergo self-denials which have no name, which we may attempt to describe, but which none but a mother can feel, and none but a mother can undergo. Let her tell, whether she is not firmly

convinced, by that same feeling, that there is, in the heart of her infant, a gratitude, and a confidence, and an attachment, which is better than selfish, which is implanted, as is her own love, by her Heavenly Father.

I know the cold and heartless doctrine, which does not deny the existence of such a feeling, but which accounts for it by calling it a salutary deception, intended to induce the mother to be careful in the fulfilment of her duty. Have I called this doctrine cold and heartless? Then let me add, that I do not wish to cast an imputation on those who may hold it, from whatever motives it may be : but I cannot bring myself to sympathise with them.

Let others advocate the theory, that evil may be done that good may come of it. Let man try to palliate by this theory his own weakness : but let him not presume to transfer that principle to the works of Him who is all wisdom, all power, and all love.

No : I will never believe that God, to endear to her, by a pleasing delusion, her difficult and often painful duty,—I will never believe, *that the Father of Truth has implanted a lying spirit in the heart of the mother.*

LETTER VIII.

NOVEMBER 15, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I WOULD call upon the mother to be thankful to God, that He has so much facilitated her task, by implanting in her infant's heart those germs, which, under His guidance, and with His blessing, it will be her duty to develope, to protect, and to strengthen, until they may be matured into real fruits of faith and love.

For it will be her task, in a world of corruption, to guard infant innocence, and to mature it into principle. In a world of inconstancy, of distrust, of unbelief, it will be incumbent on her to be assiduous, that the serene, the amiable security of that innocence, with which it now reposes in her arms, may one day grow into unshaken confidence in all that is good here below, and in all that is sacred above. And in a world of selfishness, hers will be the care to direct and expand the instinctive attachment of her infant into the spring of active benevolence, which in a good cause will shrink from no self-denials, and think no sacrifice too great.

How could she ever hope to succeed in this, the great end of education, if the Creator had not instructed the child with those faculties which will

admit of judicious direction and development? The requisite for education does not only consist in the qualification of those who undertake the task; it consists in the qualification of the child also, in whose nature that must be found, which proclaims louder than any thing else the great end of Infinite Wisdom in the creation of man. First of all, therefore, let the mother rejoice, that whatever may be the weakness of human nature, however great may be the temptations, yet there is in her child a something, the origin of which, as a gift of God, dates prior to temptation, or to corruption. Let her rejoice, that in her child there is that, which

———“ nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple state, nor culture, can bestow :
But GOD alone !—when first His active hand
Imprints the secret bias of the soul.”

But will this doctrine be equally acceptable to all as it is to myself, and as I trust that it will be to you?

I have heard it said, my dear friend, that there are many in my own country, and in yours, who will reject it altogether, because they will say, that it is not *orthodox*.

Now I would ask, who the men are, who think they are privileged to say, that their views alone are *orthodox*? that their doctrine alone, to the exclusion of all others, is the right one? I could wish them to come forward, and tell us what are their credentials; credentials, not indeed signed by the hand of men, however wise, for the wisest are liable to error;—

however powerful, for the most powerful may be tempted into pride;—but testimonials that will fully bear them out in their assumed character as the exclusive owners, as the sole interpreters of *His* truth, who wishes all His children “to take the water of life freely;” and not “hew out cisterns that have no water,” nor to be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” If they have any such credentials, it is fit that we should know them, and bow to their authority. If not, it is fit, at least, that they should not pretend at what does not belong to them, any more than it does to us,—exclusive authority,—and that they should, in their turn, grant to us, what nobody will think of withholding from them—the right of *freedom of conscience and private judgment*.

I do indeed hope, that the time is at length come, when it will no longer be asked, whether a theory does or does not agree with the interest of one class of men, or with the preconceived opinions of another; but, whether it rests on observation, on experience, on a right use of reason, and an unbiassed view of revelation; disdaining the comments of men, and acknowledging, as its only basis, the word of God.

Thus I would meet one class of objections. But I anticipate another class of doubts, of a far different nature,—not arising from a disposition in those who hold them, to over-rate their own judgment, and consequently to slight that of others; but rather from the consideration of the weakness of all human reasoning, and from an unwillingness to part with views, which have been adopted in early youth, and conscientiously

preserved as the sacred legacy perhaps of those who are no more; views which have grown upon their esteem, and which are now connected with the best interest of their heart, because they have seen those who held them, set an example which no event shall ever obliterate from their memory, and which no difficulty shall ever discourage them from imitating.

I can easily fancy, that upon similar grounds a mother might be inclined not so much to dispute the correctness of the theory, but rather to question the right of giving way to it in opposition to what she has been in the habit of revering as uncontroverted truth. "Shall she abandon principles held by those who watched with anxiety the first dawn of her own mind, when an infant, and who were unremitting in their exertions to form it, and to direct it to truth? Shall she give up her mind to the examination of theories, and those perhaps the theories of a stranger, rather than follow the wishes of her friends? Is it so necessary to inquire into the existence of facts, instead of being guided by the practice of those whom experience has taught her to respect, and whom her heart prompts her to love? Should it be so difficult to succeed, should not maternal love make up for a deficiency of knowledge? And, if so, God forbid, that her principles of education should in any way be connected with views, which she has been taught to consider as erroneous, perhaps as dangerous, and altogether opposite to divine truth?"

To such doubts, and thus brought forward, I should answer: "Mother! I congratulate you on your doubts, although they tend to alienate you from views

which I hold, and which thousands have held before me. But your doubts betray that feeling, to which of all others I should wish to see the heart of every mother alive. Do not then turn away, on your arduous path, from the proffered hand of one, who, though he participates not in your reasoning, yet honours your feelings, and would fain assist you, as far as in him lies, in your endeavours. It is probable that I may never know you. My days may be numbered, my glass may be run, long before you may chance to hear, that in a far distant land, in a valley between his native Alps, there lived, and lived to old age, a man, who knew not a cause of higher interest, or of greater importance, than that in which you are now engaged; whose life has been spent in endeavours, weak perhaps, but in which was concentrated all his strength, to assist in their task the mothers, and those who may act in their place, and those on whom may devolve the duty of guiding the mind at a more advanced period of youth; a man, who wishes that others may take up what he has commenced, and succeed where he may have failed; who trusts that his friends will speak, where his voice could not have gained a hearing; and act, where his own efforts would have passed unnoticed; a man, who firmly believes, that there is an invisible tie to unite all those whose hearts have embraced the same sacred cause, and who would hail with delight their appearance, to whatever nation they may belong, to whatever opinions they may be addicted; a man, who, in his dreams, (and, if dreams they were, more pleasing dreams there cannot exist) has thought of such as you, whose heart is warm, whose piety is

genuine, but who differ from him, and perhaps widely, in opinion.

“ And on account of that difference, should there be no communion between us ?

“ Do not think that I have a wish to make you a convert to my opinions. No, never swerve for one moment from the principles which you now follow, from motives that reasoning alone may suggest, unless your HEART concur in it. Let this be the test by which you examine the notions that you may hear from others ; and always act up to the best of your knowledge, as your conscience directs you.

“ Let this be the test by which you examine the ideas now before you. Adopt of them as much as your heart will warrant you. As to the rest of them, you may, perhaps, be inclined to believe, that they have proceeded from conviction as sincere, and from intentions no less benevolent.

“ But you may consider them erroneous,—some of them, perhaps, even mischievous. You may even lament, that those should have held them, whom you might wish to meet on a ground where you now must secede from them.

“ I, for my own part, rejoice, that my creed does not countenance any such apprehension in me with regard to you. For it is my hope, in which I rejoice, that those who have been earnest in their wish, and stedfast in their attempts to do good, not indeed relying upon any strength or merit of their own, but acknowledging their own failings, and giving God the glory of their success ; it is my hope, that they

may, in humbleness of heart, but with the confidence of faith, address themselves, in every situation of their life, and in their expectation for days to come, to Divine Mercy."

LETTER IX.

NOVEMBER 20, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I SHALL try in this, and in some subsequent letters, to describe the facts which may be considered as the first manifestation of the good principle of which I have spoken. I shall then proceed to point out the common mistake, by which it is frequently either altogether overlooked, or even perverted by injudicious treatment, so that, instead of acting as a moral preservative, instead of being instrumental to the spiritual elevation, it is rendered contributive to the corruption of the best powers of human nature.

It will be unpleasant to dwell upon this topic; it will be necessary to allude to the source of all the mental and moral misery which our flesh is heir to; it will be indispensable to convince many a fond mother, that what was well meant, is not always well done, and strongly to impress upon her mind the fact, that by a mode of proceeding flowing from the most benevolent motives, but which would not have stood the test of a matured judgment, she may entail on her children all that misery, against which it was her only wish to protect them.

But if, in going over the ground now before us, we

shall have frequent occasion to lamentt he short-sightedness of some, and the indolence of others, we shall also have occasion to rejoice, that the means by which so much misery may be avoided, and by which a still greater portion of happiness may be secured, are by no means out of the reach of the mother. Indeed, whenever I have met with a mother, who distinguished herself by the care which she gave to the education of her children, and by the success which she obtained, I have always found, that the principles upon which she acted, and the means which she employed, were not the result of a long and difficult search, but rather of a resolution adopted in time, and constantly followed, to do no step without pausing for a moment to reflect: and I have not found, that this led to an over-anxiety on her part, or to that state of continual agitation which we sometimes observe preying on the heart of a mother, who is always calculating the remote consequences of trifles, with almost feverish apprehension.

This last mentioned state of the mind, which must mar the cheerfulness of her spirits, so essential for a judicious and effective education, generally ensues upon a prior want of discretion, that may have led to consequences which, in their turn, give rise to needless apprehensions. Nothing, on the contrary, is so well calculated to secure to the mind an imperturbable tranquillity, as a timely exercise of judgment, and a constant habit of reflection.

I know not if philosophers would think it worth their while, but I feel confident that a mother would not decline following us to the consideration of the

state in which the infant remains for some time after his birth.

This state, in the first place, strikes us as a state of utter helplessness. The first impression seems to be that of pain, or, at least, of a sensation of uneasiness. There is not yet the slightest circumstance that might remind us of any other faculties, except those of the animal nature of man; and even these are on the very lowest stage of development.

Still there is in this animal nature an instinct which acts with greater security, and which increases in strength as the functions of animal life are repeated, day for day: this animal instinct has been known to make the most rapid progress, and to arrive very early at the highest point of strength and intensity, even when little or no attention has been paid to protect the infant from surrounding dangers, or to strengthen it by more than ordinary nourishment and care. It is a well-known fact, that among savage nations the animal powers of children are capable of exertions, and are developing with a rapidity which proves sufficiently that this part of human nature goes altogether parallel with the instinct in the rest of the animal creation.

So striking is this similarity, that we frequently find every attempt to discover any trace of another faculty treated with ridicule. Indeed, while we are assiduous in our attention to that part of human nature in the earliest stage of life, which would require but little of our care, we are but too apt to overlook and to neglect that which in its first appearance is certainly very weak, but which is, by its very weakness, entitled to our care and support, and which may well inspire us with

an interest in its development, that will amply reward us for our labours.

For, striking as this similarity may be, we can never be justified in overlooking the distinction that exists between the infant, even in the first era of life, and between the animal, which apparently may have made a more rapid progress, and may be far superior in the qualifications which constitute a sound and comfortable state of animal existence.

The animal will for ever remain on that point of bodily strength and sagacity, to which its instinct has conducted it so rapidly. For the whole duration of its life, its enjoyments, and exertions, and, if we may say so, its attainments, will remain stationary. It may, through old age, or through unfavourable circumstances, be thrown back ; but it will never advance beyond that line of physical perfection, which is attendant on its full growth. A new faculty, or an additional agency of the former ones, is an event unheard of in the natural history of the animal creation.

It is not the same with man.

In him there is something which will not fail, in due time, of making itself manifest by a series of facts altogether independent of animal life. While the animal is for ever actuated by that instinct to which it owes its preservation, and all its powers and enjoyments, a something will assert its right in man, to hold the empire over all his powers ; to controul the lower part of his nature, and to lead him to those exertions which will secure for him a place in the scale of moral being.

The animal is destined by the Creator to follow

the instinct of its nature. Man is destined to follow a higher principle. His animal nature must no longer be permitted to rule him, as soon as his spiritual nature has commenced to unfold.

It will be the object of my next letter to point out to the mother the epoch at which she may expect the first tokens of a spiritual nature in her infant.

LETTER X.

NOVEMBER 27, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I HAVE frequently heard it observed, that there is not a more humiliating consideration than that of the first condition of man, when he has entered this world, a helpless stranger, equally unable to speak his wants, or to think of supplying them, or to give any token by which he might be recognised as a member of the rational creation.

I admit, that all this must strongly remind us of the weakness of our nature, that it may guard us against the presumption of trusting in our own powers; and I think it right to encourage any reflection which may call back to our mind what we are but too apt to forget. But though this consideration is by no means flattering to our vanity, yet I cannot see why it should be so peculiarly humiliating.

Let the case be put as strongly as observation may warrant us to do. Let it be granted, that weeks must pass, before the infant will give any proof of any faculty superior to those of irrational animals. Let it be added, that no animal is so physically helpless, so destitute of power, as the infant for some time after his birth. And thus let the commencement of human

life occupy the lowest place even in the scale of mere animal existence.

Still I confess that, in a moral point of view, I cannot find any thing humiliating in this fact.

To see a rational being brutalized—that indeed may be called the severest lesson to any one who has a wish to vindicate the moral character of human nature. But this most humiliating observation will bear no comparison with the fact now before us.

Or, who is not aware of the immense difference between a state of animal existence, to which the manifestation of spiritual life will succeed, and between moral and responsible existence, in which the germs of that life have been oppressed, and blighted. In the one instance, we look forward to progressive elevation; in the other, we turn away from successive degradation. Before the light of intelligence has appeared, before the voice of conscience has spoken, neither error nor corruption can exist; but where the one has been darkened, and the other is slighted, there may we lament over the blindness, the selfishness of man.

Instead, therefore, of dwelling exclusively on the want of an intellectual and moral principle, we ought rather to watch its first appearance; instead of reviling the work of the Creator, we ought to acknowledge his wisdom in opening, at whatever period it may please Him, the eyes of his creatures, and unclosing to them both a visible world full of miracles, and a spiritual world full of blessing: instead of complaining, than which nothing can be more wrong, and more unwise, that He has not created us more perfect, we ought rather to examine ourselves, how far we are still from

that point of perfection, which He has placed within our reach.

I have said thus much, because the subject affords frequent scope to thoughtless and frivolous remarks, which might perhaps in some measure contribute to damp the zeal and interest of mothers. But I trust that a mother will always consult her own experience, and her own heart, rather than the sophistry of those who cannot feel with her.

Let her then consider the stranger on her breast as a being destined for a better existence than the one in which he now unconsciously looks up to her for that support which Providence has placed it in her means to give. Let her not only follow that instinctive affection, which could not allow her to be insensible to the wants of her infant; let her look forward to the time in which her infant shall be alive to a sense of duty in this, and to hope for another world: and let her not forget, that while such is the destination of her infant, on her devolves the task of preparing, and of teaching him, the first and most difficult steps of his path.

And when the first weeks of anxiety on her part, and of unconsciousness on that of her infant, are over; when the attention which is required, becomes monotonous and wearying; then will the mother feel a longing for something to animate the scene, to enhance the interest, and to encourage her to new exertions.

Nor shall she be disappointed; for the day will come, when the infant will no longer apply to the mother, only because her attention and her support are to him a source of animal gratification. The day will

come, when his eye will catch the eye of the mother; when it will read there a language, new, and yet not unknown; when that look of love will call into life the first smile, to play round the lips of the infant.

With this fact, a new era begins in the infant's life. With it, a new world opens to his view. He has entered a new stage of existence; he has vindicated his character as a being superior to the rest of the animal creation.

The smile of joy, and the tear of sympathy, are denied to the animal race. They are given to man; they constitute a tacit language, common to all, and understood, because felt, by all. They are the earliest signs of feeling, which belong exclusively to man.

They are the early witnesses, whose meaning cannot be mistaken, of internal emotions. The character of these emotions may change, they may be momentary or permanent, and their objects may extend to endless variety; but the signs which Nature has appointed for them, remain the same; and thus they will continue through life the never-failing indexes of feeling, whether it be clouded in silent grief, or wrapped in tranquil serenity; whether it make the bosom throb with agony, or heave with delight.

LETTER XI.

DECEMBER 5, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I HAVE tried, in my last letter, to justify, on philosophical grounds, the importance which every mother is inclined to attach to the epoch, when the eye of her infant for the first time meets her own; when the expression of love in her own countenance for the first time calls into play a similar expression in the features of the infant.

This fact, which a mother will always hail with a delight inconceivable to those who cannot share in her feelings, may lead her to a train of considerations, which she will never repent of having duly weighed, and in which I shall now attempt to follow her.

The first great truth, which cannot but strike her at the very outset, is this:—it was by *kindness*, by a manifestation of maternal love, that she has produced the first visible impression on the eye and the features of her infant. She will be fully justified by experience, if she recognises in this impression the first influence of her individual conduct on the mind and the heart of the infant.

Let her never lose sight of this fact. Providence, by ordering that it should be thus in the course of nature, has pointed out to her a leading truth, if she will but advert to it, which she may lay down as a never-failing principle of education. In the formation of character, as well as in the mode of giving instruction, kindness ought to be the first and ruling principle: it certainly is the most powerful. Fear may do much, and other motives may be employed with apparent success; but to interest the mind, and to form the heart, nothing is so permanently influential as affection: it is the easiest way to attain the highest ends.

I have called the fact, of which I am now speaking, a manifestation of the spiritual nature in man. As such, it will invite the mother to take a new view of her relation to the child.

Her child is, like herself, a being endowed with spiritual faculties—with faculties superior to, and in a great measure independent of, animal life. The less they are developed in their present state, the greater is the attention which they require.

Providence has instructed her with the means of supplying the animal wants of the child. We have seen, that the child also is instructed with an animal instinct, which facilitates the task. But the eye of the child, when it meets that of the mother—that eye, does not seek for the mere gratification of a present want, or for relief from a present sensation of uneasiness: it seeks for something more; it speaks of the first want of spiritual nature; it seeks for sympathy.

The animal instinct is a principle which knows no higher object than self. Self-preservation is the first point which it tries to secure; and in its progressive desire of enjoyment, self is still the centre of its agency.

It is not the same with the mind, or with the affections of the heart. The fact which speaks most unquestionably for the spiritual nature of man, is the sacrifice of personal comfort or enjoyment, for the happiness of others; the subordination of individual desire, to higher purposes.

A moral philosopher has said, that whenever the mind reflects to the future or the invisible, in preference to the present and to visible objects, then the spirit asserts its right.

If we connect this observation with the preceding remarks, we may deduce from them a few plain and practical rules, by which the mother may be enabled, without any pretensions to deep and laborious research, to do much that will prove truly beneficial to the highest interests of her infant, and to the better part of its nature.

Any measure that we would recommend her at so early a period, must of course be practicable without any thing like instruction: it must not induce her to go out of the way which Providence has assigned to her: it must not be of a nature that could be modified, or rendered more difficult, by her situation in life, whatever it may be: it must, in fact, be limited to the manner, and the spirit, in which that is done, which every mother has both the wish and the faculty of doing for her infant.

LETTER XII.

DECEMBER 3, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

WE have seen, that the animal instinct is always intent on instantaneous gratification, without ever advertg to the comfort or interest of others.

As long as no other faculty is awake, this instinct, and its exclusive dominion over the child, cannot properly be considered as faulty; there is not yet any consciousness in it: if it be selfish in appearance, it is not wilfully so; and the Creator himself seems to have ordained, that it should be so strong, and, indeed, exclusively prevailing, while consciousness and other faculties could not yet contribute to secure even the first condition of animal life—self-preservation.

But if, after the first indication of an higher principle, this instinct be still allowed to act, unchecked and uncontrouled as before, then it will commence to be at war with conscience, and every step in which it is indulged, will carry the child farther in selfishness, at the expence of his better and more amiable nature.

I wish this to be clearly understood; and I shall perhaps better succeed in explaining the rules which I conceive to flow from it for the use of the mother,

than in dwelling longer on the abstract position. In the first place, let the mother adhere stedfastly to the good old rule, to be regular in her attention to the infant; to pursue as much as possible the same course; never to neglect the wants of her child when they are real, and never to indulge them when they are imaginary, or because they are expressed with importunity. The earlier and the more constant her adherence to this practice, the greater and the more lasting will be the real benefit obtained for her child.*

The expediency, and the advantages of such a plan will soon be perceived, if it is constantly practised. The first advantage will be on the part of the mother. She will be subject to fewer interruptions; she will be less tempted to give way to ill humour; though her patience may be tried, yet her temper will not be ruffled: she will, upon all occasions, derive real satisfaction from her intercourse with her child; and her duties will not more often remind her, than her enjoyments, that she is a mother.

But the advantage will be still greater on the part of the child,

* "It seems plain to me, that the principle of all virtue and excellence, lies in a power of denying ourselves the satisfaction of our own desires, where reason does not authorise them. This power is to be got and improved by custom, made easy and familiar by an **EARLY PRACTICE**. If, therefore, I might be heard, I would advise, that contrary to the ordinary way, children should be used to submit their desires, and go without their longings, even **FROM THEIR VERY CRADLES**.....If the world commonly does otherwise, I cannot help that. I am saying what I think should be done, which, if it were already in fashion, I should not need to trouble the world with a discourse on this subject."—*Locke on Education*, § 28, p. 42.

Every mother will be able to speak from experience, either to the benefit which her children derived from such a treatment, or to the unfavourable consequences of a contrary proceeding. In the first instance, their wants will have been few, and easily satisfied; and there is not a more infallible criterion of perfect good health. But if, on the contrary, that rule has been neglected; if, from a wish to avoid any thing like severity, a mother has been tempted to give way to unlimited indulgence; it will but too soon appear, that her treatment, however well-meant, has been injudicious. It will be a source of constant uneasiness to her, without giving satisfaction to her child; she will have sacrificed her own rest, without securing the happiness of her child.

Let the mothers tell, who have been unfortunate enough to fall into this mistake, whether they have not had frequent occasion to repent of their ill-timed indulgence, unless they had the still greater misfortune of substituting in its place the other extreme—a habit of indolence and cold neglect. And let the children tell, who were brought up in early youth under an excess of indulgence, whether they have not been suffering under the consequences; whether hurrying on from excitement to excitement, they have ever felt that health and tranquillity, that evenness of spirits, which is the first requisite to rational enjoyment and to lasting happiness.

Let them tell, whether such a system is apt to give a relish for the innocent sports, for the never-to-be-forgotten feats of boyhood; whether it imparts energy to withstand the temptation, or to share in the noble

enthusiasm of youth ; whether it ensures firmness and success to the exertions of manhood.

We are not all born to be philosophers ; but we aspire all to a sound state both of mind and body, and of this the leading feature is—*to desire little, and to be satisfied with even less.*

LETTER XIII.

DECEMBER 12, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

THE greatest benefit that results from a treatment of the child, such as the good old rule enjoins, is of a moral nature.

When I speak of moral benefit, or of moral deterioration, I do not lose sight of the tender age to which I would ascribe it. I am not now speaking of a child in whom reason has in some degree been developed, and to whom you may attempt, with some hope of success, to explain the ideas of right or wrong, on which our private duties, and the fabric of our social system, are founded.

No; I am speaking of that period of infancy, at which many, and perhaps most philosophers, would contend, that a moral faculty is either totally wanting, or at least dormant.

If, therefore, what I have to say on the subject, shall appear altogether visionary, I have only to reply, that

I am ready to give it up, whenever I shall stand convicted of its nullity by EXPERIENCE.

Till then, I mean to hold, that the better nature of the infant must be encouraged, as early as possible, to struggle against the over-growing power of the animal instinct, which I consider as the basis of the lower nature of man.

The agency of this animal instinct will become more manifest with every subsequent day of the infant's life. This instinct, now no more content with its first efforts, which were necessary to self-preservation, is rapidly encreasing in strength. *The eagerness of this craving of an infant forms a strong contrast with the weakness of its physical powers.* It would grasp every object which it perceives; there is nothing that strikes its curiosity, but that at the same time excites its desires; and the inconceivable obstinacy of this craving increases in the same measure as the object is placed out of its reach.

Whatever there is ungainly and unamiable in a little child, will be found, in some way or other, connected with the agency of this animal instinct. For even the impatience of the infant, while under the influence of circumstances which may cause physical pain, is no more than a reaction of that instinct.

If we consider the state of the infant, with its desires and its impatience, we shall see that it furnishes a striking parallel to the image of man under the influence of his passions.

It is customary to say, that passion should be overcome by principle, and that our desires should be regulated by reason. But at a time when we cannot

yet appeal to either, Providence has supplied a still more powerful agent in their stead,—maternal love.

The only influence to which the heart is accessible long before the understanding could have adopted or rejected it as a motive, is affection. And it is a fact, that no person can be so well qualified at an early period to gain the affection of a child, as the mother.

If, therefore, I find it asserted by an eminent writer, that, in order to settle your authority over your children, “Fear and awe ought to give you the first power over their minds, and love and friendship in riper years to hold it;”—I can only imagine, that a mistake has led that writer into a statement which is openly at war with the enlightened sentiments expressed in so many other pages of his valuable work.

For even supposing for a moment, that the course which appears to be recommended in the above passage were found expedient and beneficial, as I am convinced that it will not be, still I cannot see how it should even be practicable at the time that I am speaking of.

“Fear,” implies a knowledge of the consequences of an action or an event. It implies a consciousness of causality; and causality, in its turn, pre-supposes a faculty of observing, comparing, and combining a variety of facts, and of deducing from them a conclusion.

Surely the ingenious writer from whom I have quoted, could not have given credit to the infant for a course of reasoning so complicated, so foreign to the state of its mental faculties.

“Fear,” then, we shall be obliged to dismiss at once. Even if it were not, as a motive of action, unworthy of

a human being, it would be inapplicable at the first, and certainly not the least important period of life.

By "awe" may be understood, either an indistinct and vague feeling, which casts a veil over the mind, and while it works upon the imagination, and the nervous system, has nothing to do with reasoning, and is not fit to direct the faculties to a certain line of action; or else, "awe" may be said to originate in a conviction of the moral superiority of another being, that pervades the mind, and prompts the heart to look with veneration on subjects which the intellect is unable to scan, and to follow precepts which have received their sanction from Infinite Wisdom.

That awe, in the first-mentioned sense, has some affinity with the first sensations of an infant, I admit. But every thing of that sort, that may be said to belong to infancy, originates in a feeling of helplessness, or of occasional pain. It may, then, be said to be a mere physical phænomenon: and as such, I conceive that it would be little qualified for a motive to be employed in moral education. But besides, it could not serve as a motive, because, from its nature, it is a mere transient sensation, and cannot, of course, lead to a constant line of conduct, or contribute to form a moral habit.

Awe, in the other sense, again seems to pre-suppose more than one idea, to which the infant is yet, and must for some time continue to be, a stranger. Moral worth can only be appreciated, when there is a consciousness of moral energy. And if divested from its character as a moral feeling, it will be dissolved into fear. But, in the better sense, the feeling of awe, which is essential

in the formation of religious ideas, and in the communication of religious impressions, ought to be reserved for that period, when it will be first excited by a consideration of that Being, to whom, with the exclusion of all finite beings, that feeling may be said to be due in a pre-eminent degree.

LETTER XIV.

DECEMBER 17, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

FROM the reasons stated in my last letter, I think it right to assume, that maternal love is the most powerful agent, and that affection is the primitive motive in early education.

In the first exercise of her authority, the mother will therefore do well to be cautious, that every step may be justified by her conscience, and by experience; she will do well to think of her responsibility, and of the important consequences of her measures for the future welfare of her child; she will find, that the only correct view of the nature of her own authority is, to look upon it as a duty rather than as a prerogative, and never to consider it as absolute.

If the infant remains quiet, if it is not impatient or troublesome, it will do so *for the sake of the mother*.

I would wish every mother to pay attention to the difference between a course of action, adopted in compliance with *the authority*, and between a conduct pursued *for the sake of another*.

The first proceeds from reasoning, the second flows from affection. The first may be abandoned, when

the immediate cause may have ceased to exist; the latter will be permanent, as it did not depend upon circumstances, or accidental considerations, but is founded in a moral and constant principle.

In the case now before us, if the infant does not disappoint the hope of the mother, it will be a proof, first of affection, and secondly, of confidence.

Of affection—for the earliest, and the most innocent wish to please, is that of the infant to please the mother. If it be questioned, whether that wish can at all exist in one so little advanced in development, I would again, as I would do upon almost all occasions, appeal to the experience of mothers.

It is a proof, also, of confidence. Whenever an infant has been neglected, when the necessary attention has not been paid to its wants, and when, instead of the smile of kindness, it has been treated with the frown of severity, it will be difficult to restore it to that quiet and amiable disposition, in which it will wait for the gratification of its desires without impatience, and enjoy it without greediness.

If affection and confidence have once gained ground in the heart, it will be the first duty of the mother to do every thing in her power to encourage, to strengthen, and to elevate this principle.

She must encourage it, or the yet tender emotion will subside, and the strings which are no longer attuned to sympathy, will cease to vibrate, and sink into silence. But affection has never yet been encouraged except by affection; and confidence has never been gained except by confidence: the tone of her own mind must raise that of her child.

For she must be intent also upon strengthening that principle. Now there is one means only for strengthening any energy, and that means is practice. The same effort, constantly repeated, will become less and less difficult, and every power, mental or physical, will go through a certain exercise with more assurance and success, the more it grows familiar with it by custom. There cannot, therefore, be a safer course for the mother to pursue, than to be careful that her proceedings may, without interruption or dissonance, be calculated to excite the affection, and secure the confidence, of her child. She must not give way to ill humour, or tedium, not for one moment; for it is difficult to say how the child may be affected by the most trifling circumstance. It cannot examine the motives, nor can it anticipate the consequences, of an action: with little more than a general impression of the past, it is entirely unconscious of the future; and thus the present bears upon the infant mind with the full weight of pain, or soothes it with the undiminished charm of pleasing emotions. If the mother consider this well, she may spare her child the feeling of much pain, which, though not remembered as occasioned by special occurrences, may yet leave a cloud as it were upon the mind, and gradually weaken that feeling which it is her interest, as well as her duty, to keep awake.

But it is not enough for her to encourage and strengthen,—she must also elevate that same feeling.

She must not rest satisfied with the success which the benevolence of her own intentions, and perhaps

the disposition and temper of her child, may have facilitated: she must recollect, that education is not a uniform and mechanical process, but a work of gradual and progressive improvement. Her present success must not betray her into security or indolence; and the difficulties which she may chance to meet with must not damp her zeal, or stop her endeavours. She must bear in mind the ultimate ends of education; she must always be ready to take her share in the work, which, as a mother, she stands pledged to forward—the elevation of the moral nature of man.

LETTER XV.

DECEMBER 24, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

OF all the affections of our nature, the most deserving of encouragement, the most kindred to the standard of true humanity, are no doubt those which are not confined to perishable objects; which do not solely act upon the imagination, but which are apt to expand the mind, and inspire the heart with a noble zeal for all that is truly excellent.

This consideration is of incalculable importance for the interest of moral education. It should form the very basis of all that a plan of education may propose, or a system comprehend.

If it is necessary to store the mind with knowledge, to enlighten the intellect, and to explain correct principles of morality; if it is desirable to form the taste; it is still more so, it is indeed indispensable, to direct, to purify, to elevate the affections of the heart: and we cannot commence at too early a period to proceed upon this principle.

I have been led into these remarks by the idea expressed in the concluding part of my last letter,—that the affection and confidence which the infant

bears to the mother should be elevated, as well as encouraged and strengthened. It will not, perhaps, be superfluous to say a few words more in explanation of that proposition.

If the affections of the child were to remain for ever concentrated in the focus of his love of the mother; if his confidence were for ever confined to her; however well she may have deserved the tribute of never-failing gratitude, it is obvious, that the child must, earlier or later in his career, experience the most severe pain and disappointment, for which, with that exclusive direction of his moral nature, he could then find no remedy. The time must come, when the tie, however sacred, which unites him visibly with his mother, must be broken: and whether it may be so ordained, that it be rudely snapped, or gently and gradually loosened, still the ultimate effect would be the same, equally painful and afflicting.

Not even the most sincere advocate for filial affection, than which few feelings can be purer or deeper,—not even he who is most intimately penetrated by that sentiment, would wish to contend for the exclusive and constant ascendancy of that principle over the mind. If we do not mean to lose sight entirely of the higher destination, and of the most exalted duties of man, we cannot conceal from ourselves, that man is not created “so noble in reason, so infinite in faculties,” to give up his whole existence to his affection for any one individual, while the most comprehensive view of his duties, both to his Maker and to his fellow-men, is clearly laid before him by a thousand witnesses, whose voice he cannot but hear.

It is clear, therefore, that the affection of the child to the mother is only to be appreciated in proportion as it serves to impress the infant mind with those emotions, and afterwards to render familiar to it those considerations, which belong to the ultimate ends, as far as we may understand them, of the Creator in the formation of man.

If a mother is conscious of this, she will not find it difficult to take the right view of the affection which Providence has implanted in her child. She will consider it as the germ on which every better feeling must be engrafted. She will be led to consider herself as the instrument which Providence has chosen, to purify that affection, to transfer its most intense agency to a still worthier object. She will then begin to understand, why the most unlimited confidence springs so early and voluntarily from the very nature of the child. She will begin to understand, that the infant is taught so early to confide, in order that one day this confidence may be centered and elevated to the confidence of a faith, that will stand unshaken by danger, and unsullied by corruption.

Let me here allude, my dear friend, to an occasional circumstance, which would have invited me to these reflections, even if I had not been engaged in conversing with you on the same theme. The date of this letter will, perhaps, remind you of a custom of my country, which you have observed while living amongst us. The days on which the Nativity of our Lord is commemorated in our churches, have been adopted, since time immemorial, as a season at which the children in every family receive from their parents, and from each other,

little tokens of affection. Need I recal to your recollection those scenes of innocent and heartfelt joy, with which you were so much pleased when you witnessed them among our children? They will convey to the mind of every observer a striking proof, how little is requisite to give the most intense satisfaction, and to afford infinite gratification, where there is a real stock of affection, and where that simplicity of heart is still left, which it should be the care of education to preserve as long as possible. You have seen, that those days are, amongst us, a real festival of affection, in its fullest and most pleasing sense: and you will certainly not have found, that the children, whose hearts were just then under the influence of affection, were less accessible to the call of sincere and heartfelt devotion.

I have mentioned this circumstance, because it would afford a copious theme for reflection on the subject that I have been treating of.

It is upon facts like this, which experience will, at some time or other, suggest to every parent, that I would ground the practical proof for the proposition, that the affections, and especially the early affection of children to their parents, might be intimately connected with, and essentially conducive to, their being imbued with those impressions, the object of which is more important than every human consideration, and more sacred than every human tie.

LETTER XVI.



DECEMBER 31, 1818.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IF the mother has once accustomed herself to take the view to which I alluded in my last, of the affection and the confidence of her infant, the whole of her duties will appear to her in a new light.

She will then look upon education, not as a task which to her is invariably connected with much labour and difficulty, but as a work of which the facility, and in a great measure the success also, is dependent on herself. She will look upon her own efforts in behalf of her child not as a matter of indifference, or at least of convenience, but as a most sacred and most weighty obligation. She will be convinced, that education does not consist in a series of admonitions and corrections, of rewards and punishments, of injunctions and directions, strung together without unity of purpose, or dignity of execution; but that it ought to present an unbroken chain of measures, originating in the same principle,—in a knowledge of the constant laws of our nature; practised in the same spirit,—a spirit of benevolence and firmness; and leading to the same end,—the elevation of man to the true dignity of a spiritual being.

But will the mother be able to spiritualise the unfolding faculties, the rising emotions of her infant? Will she be able to overcome those obstacles which the preponderance of the animal nature will throw in her way?

Not unless she has first lent her own heart to the influence of a higher principle; not unless the germs of a spiritual love and faith, which she is to develop in her child, have first gained ground in the better affections of her own being.

Here, then, it will be necessary for the mother to pause, and examine herself, how far she may expect to succeed in inculcating that to which in her own practice she may have been a stranger more than she would wish to confess to herself. But let her be sincere, for once; and if the result of her examination be less favourable to her own expectations, and less flattering to her self-love, let her resolution be the more sincere and vigorous, to discard for the future all those minor predilections, to check all those wishes which might alienate her from her new task; and to give her whole heart to that which will promote her own final happiness, and that of her child.

However difficult it may appear at first to resign, to dismiss the thought of some hopes, and to defer the accomplishment of others; still that struggle is for the very best cause, and, if serious, cannot be unsuccessful: for there is not an act of resignation, there is not a single fact in the moral world, however distinguished, to which maternal love could not furnish a parallel.

If the mother is but conscious of the sincerity of

her own intentions; if she has raised the tone of her own mind, and elevated the affections of her being above the sphere of subordinate and frivolous pursuits; she will soon be enabled to ascertain the efficacy of her influence on the child.

Her best and almost infallible criterion will be, if she really succeeds in accustoming her child to the practice of self-denial.

Of all the moral habits which may be formed by a judicious education, that of self-denial is the most difficult to acquire, and the most beneficial when adopted.

I call it a habit; for though it rests upon a principle, yet it is only by engendering a habit, that that principle gives evidence of its vitality. The practice of all other virtues, and more especially many of the actions which are admired and held out as examples, may be the result of a well-understood moral rule, which had long been theoretically known before it was applied in a practical case; or again, they may have flowed from a momentary enthusiasm, which acts with irresistible power on a mind alive to noble sentiments. But a practice of self-denial, conscientiously and cheerfully pursued, can only be the fruit of a long and constant habit.

The greatest difficulty which the mother will find in her early attempts to form that habit in her infant, does not rest with the importunity of the infant, but with her own weakness.

If she is not herself able to resign her own comfort, and her own fond desires, to her maternal love, she must not think of obtaining such a result in the

infant, for her own sake. It is impossible to inspire others with a moral feeling, if she is not herself pervaded with it. To endear any virtue to another, she must herself look upon her own duty with pleasure. If she has known Virtue only as the awe-inspiring Goddess,—

“ With gait and garb austere,
And threatening brow severe,”—

she will never obtain that mastery over the heart, which is not yielded up to authority, but bestowed as the free gift of affection.

But if the mother has in the discipline of early years, or in the experience of life, herself gone through a school of self-denial; if she has nourished in her own heart the principle of active benevolence; if she knows resignation, not by name only, but from practice; then her eloquence, her look of maternal love, her example, will be persuasive, and the infant will, in a future day, bless her memory, and honour it by virtues.

LETTER XVII.

JANUARY 7, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I AM anxious to elucidate some statements of a preceding letter, concerning the early practice of self-denial. Allow me, for this purpose, to resume the subject of my last; and if I shall appear to have dwelt too long on a favourite theme, or to have recurred to it too often, may I hope that you will ascribe this circumstance, at least, not *solely* to the loquaciousness of old age, but also to my conviction of the vital importance of the subject.

The more I have seen of the mental and moral misery under which thousands of our fellow-creatures are suffering; the more frequently I have observed the wealth without content, the splendour without happiness, among the higher classes; the closer I have investigated into the first springs of those mighty convulsions which have shaken the world, and made even our peaceful vallies ring with the shouts of war, and with the wailing of despair; the more have I been confirmed in the view, that the immediate causes of all this, and of much misery that yet remains unmentioned, have arisen from an undue superiority which the desires of the lower nature of man have assumed

over the energies of the mind, and the better affections of the heart.

And I cannot see any remedy placed within the reach of human power, to check the further progress of this misery, and the ulterior demoralisation of our race, but the early influence of mothers, to break, by firmness, the increasing power of animal selfishness, and to overcome it by affection.

This is the end to which I would wish the practice of self-denial to contribute. For this reason I insist on the circumspection to be employed by mothers in controuling the cravings of infants.

For this reason, I would again and again request the mother to be watchful in her care, to do all in her power, and to do it with cheerfulness, that none of its real wants may rest unattended to. For it is not only her duty to do so, in order to provide for the physical well-being of the child; but a neglect of this duty is to be still more anxiously avoided, because it might cast a shadow on her own affection, and provoke, if not doubts, at least a feeling of uneasiness which might afterwards lead to them.

But for this same reason I would entreat a mother to be constantly on her guard against her own weakness; never to indulge the appetite of the child with what may be stimulating to further desire, or what is, at best, superfluous; and never to encourage impertunity.*

* "An infallible way of rendering a child unhappy, is to indulge it in all its demands. Its desires multiply by gratification, without ever resting satisfied: it is lucky for the indulging parents, if it demand not

What I call weakness, she may perhaps call affection. But let her be persuaded, that the character of true affection is far different. The affection for which she would plead is merely animal: it is a feeling for which she cannot account, and which she cannot resist. It may become to her also the basis of a more elevated feeling; of spiritualised maternal love. But, to experience the latter, she must have opened her own heart to the influence of spiritual views and principles. She must herself know to bear and forbear—to resign and be humble. She must know a higher object of her wishes, a purer source of enjoyment, than present gratification. She must weigh the experience of the past, and ponder the duties of the future. Her own interest, and her own desires, must not interfere with more momentous obligations, or weaken her attachment and her zeal for the welfare of others. Her affections must not be centered in self; her wishes and her hopes must not be limited to the things of this world.

What is born of the flesh must perish. If such be her affection to her child, it will die away before she is able to do any thing for its real interest. But if her affection is of a higher origin; if its efforts bear the stamp of a calm, a mild, and conscientious spirit; it

the moon for a plaything. You cannot give every thing; and your refusal is more distressing than if you had stopt short at first. A child in pain is entitled to great indulgence; but beware of yielding to fancy; the more the child is indulged, the more headstrong it grows, and the more impatient of a disappointment.”—*Lord Kames (Loose Hints on Education, vol. 1. p. 54.)*

will enable her to conquer her own weakness, and to elevate, by a judicious controul, the rising emotions of her infant.

To those who have not had an opportunity of observing it frequently, it is impossible to form an idea of the rapidity and eagerness with which the animal instinct is increasing, if left to itself, without the salutary check of maternal influence. *But the means so frequently employed even by mothers, to restrain its increase, by the fear of punishment, can only tend to make the evil worse.* The mere act of forbidding is a strong excitement to desire. Fear can never act as a moral restraint; it can only act as a stimulant to the physical appetite, and exasperate and alienate the mind.

This then is gained by severity.* Its consequences

* "I absolutely prohibit severity; which will render the child timid, and introduce a habit of dissimulation,—the worst of habits. If such severity be exercised, so as to alienate the child's affection, there is an end to education; the parent, or keeper, is transformed into a cruel tyrant over a trembling slave. Beware, on the other hand, of betraying any uneasiness in refusing what a child calls for unreasonably: perceiving your uneasiness, it will renew its attempt, hoping to find you in a better humour. Even infants, some at least, are capable of this artifice; therefore, if an infant explain by signs, what it ought to have, let it be gratified instantly, with a cheerful countenance. If it desire what it ought not to have, let the refusal be sedate, but firm. Regard not its crying: it will soon give over, if not listened to. The task is easier with a child, who understands what is said to it: say only with a firm tone, that it cannot have what it desires; but without showing any heat on the one hand, or concern on the other. The child, believing that the thing is impossible, will cease to fret."—*Loose Hints on Education*, vol. 1. p. 48.

are, no doubt, as mischievous as those of indulgence. Against an excess of both, I can only repeat the recommendation of—*affection and firmness*.

From these two guiding principles, the mother will derive the satisfaction to see that, when her infant, from an inability to understand her motives, cannot yet respect her as a wise mother, it will, for the kindness of her manner, obey her as a loving mother.

LETTER XVIII.

JANUARY 14, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I HAVE already alluded to the period, when the child is separated from the immediate influence of maternal love.

It is natural for a mother to look forward to that period with much anxiety. The time will come, and come when it may, it will always be too soon for her, when she must give up the satisfaction of directing, herself, every step, of watching and assisting the progress of her child. A thousand apprehensions will be excited in her breast; a thousand dangers, real or imaginary, will appear to beset every step; and a thousand temptations, to lurk under the joys and the task of life into which her child is now to enter.

These apprehensions will be felt at an earlier time for a son, because the present system of society dismisses him earlier from the immediate influence of the mother. And though he may still be under the care of an affectionate parent, or of judicious and benevolent teachers, yet will a mother feel a void on the occasion, when he is for the first time separated from her side.

Then she will be disposed to retrace all the different

stages of his gradual development: the little history of his present habits, the moments in which she best succeeded to give salutary impressions, and in which his affection promised fair to overcome the less amiable part of his temper: she will be disposed to dwell more particularly on those facts, which may justify a hope, that her labour has not been in vain; that one day she shall see the fruits of her early care.

But while she will be disposed thus to dwell on the exhilarating prospect before her, her imagination, and indeed her affection, will be busy in sketching out the various scenes of his future life. The next few years may perhaps be an object altogether of less solicitude; but how should not a mother be strongly affected by the idea, that soon, very soon, he, whose tender infancy she had been protecting, will have to meet life unprepared, unless it be by the advice of his friends, by the vital energy of his principles, and by a small but perhaps dearly-bought stock of experience. Recollections of the past, and anticipations of the future, will crowd before her eyes, and as she may dismiss or resume them, her bosom will be alive to the emotions of alternate hope and fear.

“ The golden morning of his days,
A mother’s watchful care surveys ;
But shafts fly quickly from the string,
And years are fast upon the wing:—
He tears him from a mother’s side,
Eager on stormy life to roam,
With pilgrim steps he wanders wide,
Returns a stranger to his home.”

But a thinking mother will not wait till these consi-

derations are suggested by the necessity of a separation which can no longer be postponed. She will, at an early period, have occasion to reflect on the nature and the duration of her connection with the child. And far from giving rise to unpleasant or even painful feelings, this train of thought may enable her to take not only a just, but also a gratifying view of the subject.

In a previous letter I have spoken of the first connection of the mother and the child, after its birth, as being merely a phenomenon of animal nature. By this I understand, that in both, the power which unites them is, in its origin, instinctive. In the infant it is constantly excited by a feeling of want; in the mother, it is strongly supported by a consciousness of duty.

If in the mother also I ascribe to it a sort of instinctive agency, observation will, I think, furnish many facts which will clearly prove it. Among them, it is not the least remarkable, that in an individual that has, from circumstances, been called upon to act as a mother to the infant of a stranger, the same affection is very frequently engendered, as if it had been her own child. And this has been observed in cases when a nurse had not only been much grieved for the separation from her own child, but when at first she had even evinced decided aversion to the child now confided to her care. So that the maternal instinct would seem to be transferable, as it were, to another object; an observation which argues at once for its original energy, and for its priority to the circumstances under which a sense of duty alone might have led to the same efforts.

But if in the infant this instinct is manifested, before a distinct sensation of its wants was possible, and if it has acted in the mother before she has reflected on her duties, there is yet, as we have seen, one feature, and that of a pleasing kind, by which the character of this instinct is distinguished. This feature is no other but affection.

This affection, again, we may call instinctive, in its first origin. In the infant it is, at first, quite exclusive, its only object is the mother.

Still more: not only the attachment of the infant is limited to the mother, but it seems to be accessible to no kind of sensation, unless in some manner connected with her. Unpleasant sensations immediately make it look for relief or protection to her; and however earnestly strangers may exert themselves to amuse the infant, it is well known how difficult it is for them to fix its attention, without distressing, instead of pleasing.

But this state of things cannot continue very long. The more the child grows physically independent of the mother; the more it gets accustomed to use its senses and also its faculties; the less chance will there be for its affection being still exclusively confined to the mother.

And here it will become necessary for the mother to be cautious, as well against the temptation of monopolising, as against the danger of alienating, its affection.

LETTER XIX.

JANUARY 19, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

I HAVE, in my last letter, supposed an infant to be arrived at the period, when the immediate connection with the mother begins gradually to loosen itself.

The different degrees on the relaxation of this tie, must in a great measure depend on the natural disposition, and even on the physical constitution of the child. A sickly child, or one whose first movements are marked by timidity, will for a long time know of affection or confidence in no person but only the mother.

But children of a healthy constitution, will soon give signs of an inclination to make themselves independent of the assistance of others. They will be found to observe a great many objects, to which their attention has not been called in any way; next to observation, or rather together with it, will come desire; and instead of expressing this by their usual signs, and waiting patiently till it is complied with, they will make attempts to reach the object, and appropriate it to themselves. These exertions, which at first are very imperfect, and sometimes ludicrous to the beholders,

will be repeated every time with greater energy, till at length they succeed. And if it is impossible to succeed, the desire, instead of subsiding, will be only increased.

I have already alluded to these cravings of the infant, and spoken of the necessity to counteract them by firmness and benevolence.

But I did not then mean to describe them as something which in itself was bad or blameable. I described them as the necessary effects of the animal instinct, of which even an excess, though to be prevented, yet could not, at that tender age, be punishable; and from this reason, while I recommended an affectionate mode of counteracting them, or rather of substituting something better in their place, I decided against every measure that might proceed from severity.

If, on such a plan, a mother has succeeded in repressing the inordinate cravings, she will not then have the least occasion to look with other feelings than those of gratification on those little attempts at independence. They are the most unquestionable signs of the progress which a child has been making. And if they are well directed, she may look upon them as the precursors of a long and laudable activity.

All the faculties will appear to take part in the development of the child. They will all be called into play by circumstances, which surround the child every day and almost every hour.

Who knows not, that it is an event in the life of every one of us, to be able for the first time to walk without assistance? It is an event which is commemorated in the family, and related to all the friends,

who severally express their joy at the long wished-for consummation.

I would certainly not wish to spoil their joy at the event: I am far from underrating its importance: but I would, at the same time, wish them to bestow, in addition to their congratulations, a few moments upon a more serious consideration.

The time when a child first begins to walk without assistance is indeed an epoch in the history of his education. It is evident, that it is the most marked step of physical independence of others. But at the same time it occasions a new mode of manifestation of the affection.

The child, who is now able to move as he chooses, is also able to come to the mother. Instead of seeking for her with the eye only, or stretching out the little arms after her, the child is now enabled to seek the presence of the mother; and the more this has the appearance of a free and voluntary effort, the more endearing will it be to the mother, as a new sign of affection, which continues, and may long continue, a bond between them, when the last trace has disappeared of the helplessness which had first claimed it.

LETTER XX.

JANUARY 25, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IN describing the manner in which the immediate influence of the mother is gradually weakened, and the connection between her and the child loosened, we must not stop at the enumeration of those facts which I have detailed in my last.

It is not the mere physical growth, the acquirement of the full use of all the faculties of the body, which constitutes the independence of the child. The offspring of the animal creation have indeed reached the highest point of their development, when they are strong enough to subsist and provide for themselves. But it is far otherwise with the offspring of man.

In the progress of time the child not only is daily exercising and strengthening its physical faculties, but it begins also to feel intellectually and morally independent.

From observation and memory there is only one step to reflection. Though imperfect, yet this operation is frequently found among the early exercises of the infant mind. The powerful stimulus of inquisitiveness prompts to exertions, which, if successful, or encouraged by others, will lead to a habit of thought.

If we inquire into the cause of the habit of thoughtlessness, which is so frequently complained of, we shall find that there has been a want of judicious encouragement of the first attempts at thought.

Children are troublesome; their questions are of little consequence; they are constantly asking about what they do not understand; they must not have their will; they must learn to be silent.

This reasoning is frequently adopted, and, in consequence, means are found to deter children from the provoking practice of their inquisitiveness.

I am certainly of opinion, that they should not be indulged in a habit of asking idle questions. Many of their questions certainly betray nothing more than a childish curiosity. But it would be astonishing if it were otherwise; and the more judicious should be the answers which they receive.

You are acquainted with my opinion, that, as soon as the infant has reached a certain age, every object that surrounds him might be made instrumental to the excitement of thought. You are aware of the principles which I have laid down, and the exercises which I have pointed out to mothers.* You have frequently expressed your astonishment at the success with which mothers who followed my plan, or who had formed a similar one of their own, were constantly employed in awakening, in very young children, the dormant faculties of thought. The keenness

* The best practical explanation, in English, of these details, will be found in the several Numbers of the publication, "Hints to Parents. In the spirit of Pestalozzi's method."

with which they followed what was laid before them, the regularity with which they went through their little exercises, has given you the conviction, that upon a similar plan it would be easy not only for a mother to educate a few, but for a teacher also to manage a large number of very young children. But I have not now to do with the means which may be best appropriated to the purpose of developing thought. I merely want to point to the fact, that thought will spring up in the infant mind; and that, though neglected, or even misdirected, yet a restless intellectual activity must, sooner or later, enable the child, in more than one respect, to grow *intellectually independent* of others.

But the most important step is that which concerns the affections of the heart.

The infant very soon commences to show by signs, and by its whole conduct, that it is pleased with some persons, and that it entertains a dislike, or rather that it is in fear, of others.

In this respect habit and circumstances may do much; but I think it will be generally observed, that an infant will be easily accustomed to the sight and the attentions of those whom it sees frequently and in friendly relation to the mother.

Impressions of this kind are not lost upon children. The friends of the mother soon become those of the infant. An atmosphere of kindness is the most kindred to its own nature. It is unconsciously accustomed to that atmosphere, and from the undisturbed smile, and the clear and cheerful glance of the eye, it is evident that it enjoys it.

The infant, then, learns to love those whom the mother considers with affection. It learns to confide in those to whom the mother shows confidence.

Thus it will go on for some time. But the more the child observes, the more distinct are the impressions produced by the conduct of others.

It will therefore become possible even for a stranger, and one who is a stranger also to the mother, by a certain mode of conduct to gain the affection and the confidence of a child. To obtain them, the first requisite is constancy in the general conduct. It would appear scarcely credible, but it is strictly true, that children are not blind to, and that some children resent, the slightest deviation, for instance, from truth. In like manner, bad temper, once indulged, may go a great way to alienate the affection of the child, which can never be gained a second time by flatteries. This fact is certainly astonishing; and it may also be quoted as evidence for the statement, that there is in the infant a pure sense of the true and the right, which struggles against the constant temptation, arising from the weakness of human nature, to falsehood and depravity.

The child, then, begins to judge for himself, not of things only, but also of men; he acquires an idea of character; he grows, more and more, *morally independent*.

LETTER XXI.

FEBRUARY 4, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IF education is understood to be the work, not of a certain course of exercises resumed at stated times, but of a continual and benevolent superintendence; if the importance of development is acknowledged not only in favour of the memory, and the intellect, and a few abilities which lead to indispensable attainments,—but in favour of all the faculties, whatever may be their names, or nature, or energy, which Providence has implanted; its province, thus enlarged, will yet be with less difficulty surveyed from one point of view, and will have more of a systematic and truly philosophical character, than an incoherent mass of exercises, arranged without unity of principle, and gone through without interest, — which frequently, not very appropriately, receives the name of education.

We must bear in mind, that the ultimate end of education is not a perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life; not the acquirement of habits of blind obedience, and of prescribed diligence, but a preparation for independent action. We must bear in mind, that whatever class of society a pupil

may belong to, whatever calling he may be intended for, there are certain faculties in human nature common to all, which constitute the stock of the fundamental energies of man. We have no right to withhold from any one the opportunities of developing all their faculties. It may be judicious to treat some of them with marked attention, and to give up the idea of bringing others to high perfection. The diversity of talent and inclination, of plans and pursuits, is a sufficient proof for the necessity of such a distinction. But I repeat, that we have no right to shut out the child from the development of those faculties also, which we may not for the present conceive to be very essential for his future calling or station in life.

Who is not acquainted with the vicissitudes of human fortune, which have frequently rendered an attainment valuable, that was little esteemed before, or led to regret the want of application to an exercise that had been treated with contempt? Who has not at some time or other experienced the delight of being able to benefit others by his advice or assistance, under circumstances when, but for his interference, they must have been deprived of that benefit? And who, even if in practice he is a stranger to it, would not at least in theory acknowledge, that the greatest satisfaction that man can obtain, is a consciousness that he is pre-eminently qualified to render himself useful?

But even if all this were not deserving of attention; if the sufficiency of ordinary acquirements for the great majority were vindicated on grounds, perhaps, of partial experience, and of inference from well-known facts; I would still maintain, that our systems of

education have for the most part been labouring under this inconvenience, that they did not assign the due proportion to the different exercises proposed by them.

The only correct idea of this subject is to be derived from the examination of human nature with *all its faculties*. We do not find, in the vegetable or the animal kingdom, any species of objects gifted with certain qualities which are not, in some stage of its existence, called into play, and contribute to the full development of the character of the species in the individual. Even in the mineral kingdom, the wonders of Providence are incessantly manifested in the numberless combinations of chrySTALLIZATION; and thus even in the lowest department of created things, as far as we are acquainted with them, a constant law, the means employed by Supreme Intelligence, decides upon the formation, the shape, and the individual character of a mineral, according to its inherent properties. Although the circumstances under which a mineral may have been formed, or a plant may have grown, or an animal brought up, may influence and modify, yet they can never destroy that result, which the combined agency of its natural energies or qualities will produce.

Thus education, instead of merely considering what is to be imparted to children, ought to consider first what they may be said already to possess, if not as a developed, at least as an involved faculty capable of development. Or if, instead of speaking thus in the abstract, we will but recollect, that it is to the great Author of life, that man owes the possession, and is responsible for the use, of his innate faculties, edu-

cation should not only decide what is to be made of a child, but rather inquire, what is a child qualified for? what is his destiny, as a created and responsible being? what are his faculties as a rational and moral being? what are the means pointed out for their perfection, and the end held out as the highest object of their efforts, by the Almighty Father of all, both in creation, and in the page of revelation?

To these questions, the answer must be simple and comprehensive. It must combine all mankind,—it must be applicable to all, without distinction of zones, or nations, in which they may be born. It must acknowledge, in the first place, the rights of man in the fullest sense of the word. It must proceed to show, that these rights, far from being confined to those exterior advantages which have from time to time been secured by a successful struggle of the people, embrace a much higher privilege, the nature of which is not yet generally understood or appreciated. They embrace the rightful claims of all classes to a general diffusion of useful knowledge, a careful development of the intellect, and judicious attention to all the faculties of man, physical, intellectual, and moral.

It is in vain to talk of liberty, when man is unnerved, or his mind not stored with knowledge, or his judgment neglected, and above all, when he is left unconscious of his rights and his duties as a moral being.*

* "We entertain a firm conviction, that the principles of liberty, as in government and trade, so also in education, are all-important to the happiness of mankind. To the triumph of those principles we look forward, not, we trust, with a fanatical confidence, but assuredly with

LETTER XXII.

FEBRUARY 10, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IF, according to correct principles of education, all the faculties of man are to be developed, and all his slumbering energies called into play, the early attention of mothers must be directed to a subject which is generally considered to require neither much thought nor experience, and therefore as generally neglected. I mean the physical education of children.

Who has not a few general sentences at hand, which he will be ready to quote, but perhaps not to practise, on the management of children? I am aware, that much has been done away with, that used to exercise the very worst influence on children. I am aware that the general management of them has become much more rational, and that their tasks and amusements have been much improved by a judicious attention to their wants and their faculties. But much still

a cheerful and steadfast hope. Their nature may be misunderstood; their progress may be retarded. They may be maligned, derided, nay, at times exploded, and apparently forgotten. But we do, in our souls, believe that they are strong with the strength, and quick with the vitality of truth; that when they fall, it is to rebound; that when they recede, it is to spring forward with greater elasticity; that when they seem to perish, there are the seeds of renovation in their very decay."—*Edinburgh Review*, March 1826.

remains to be done ; and we shall deserve little credit for a real wish to improve, if we suffer ourselves to rest satisfied with the idea, that all is not so bad as it might be, or as it may have been.

The revival of gymnastics is, in my opinion, the most important step that has been done in that direction. The great merit of the gymnastic art is not the facility with which certain exercises are performed, or the qualification which they may give for certain exertions that require much energy and dexterity ; though an attainment of that sort is by no means to be despised. But the greatest advantage resulting from a practice of those exercises, is the natural progress which is observed in the arrangement of them, beginning with those which, while they are easy in themselves, yet lead as a preparatory practice to others which are more complicated and more difficult. There is not, perhaps, any art in which it may be so clearly shown, that energies which appeared to be wanting, are to be produced, as it were, or at least are to be developed by no other means than practice alone. This might afford a most useful hint to all those who are engaged in teaching any object of instruction, and who meet with difficulties in bringing their pupils to that proficiency which they had expected. Let them recommence on a new plan, in which the exercises shall be differently arranged, and the subjects brought forward in a manner that will admit of the natural progress from the easier to the more difficult. When talent is wanting altogether, I know that it cannot be imparted by any system of education. But I have been taught by experience to consider the cases, in which talents of any kind are absolutely wanting, but very

few. And in most cases, I have had the satisfaction to find, that a faculty which had been quite given over, instead of being developed, had been obstructed rather in its agency by a variety of exercises which tended to perplex or to deter from further exertion.

And here I would attend to a prejudice, which is common enough concerning the use of gymnastics: it is frequently said, that they may be very good for those who are strong enough; but that those who are suffering from weakness of constitution would be altogether unequal to, and even endangered by, a practice of gymnastics.

Now I will venture to say, that this rests merely upon a misunderstanding of the first principles of gymnastics: the exercises not only vary in proportion to the strength of individuals; but exercises may be, and have been devised, for those also who were decidedly suffering. And I have consulted the authority of the first physicians, who declared, that in cases which had come under their personal observation, individuals affected with pulmonary complaints, if these had not already proceeded too far, had been materially relieved and benefitted by a constant practice of the few and simple exercises, which the system in such cases proposes.

And for this very reason, that exercises may be devised for every age, and for every degree of bodily strength, however reduced, I consider it to be essential, that mothers should make themselves acquainted with the principles of gymnastics, in order that, among the elementary and preparatory exercises, they may be able to select those which, according to circumstances, will be most likely to suit and benefit their children.

I do not mean to say, that mothers should strictly adhere to those exercises only which they may find pointed out in a work on gymnastics; they may, of course, vary them as they find desirable or advisable; but I would recommend a mother much rather to consult one who has some experience in the management of gymnastics *with children*, before she decides upon altering the course proposed, or adopting other exercises of which she is unable to calculate the exact degree of strength which they may require, or the benefit that her children may derive from them.

If the physical advantage of gymnastics is great and uncontrovertible, I would contend, that the moral advantage resulting from them is as valuable. I would again appeal to your own observation. You have seen a number of Schools in Germany and Switzerland, of which gymnastics formed a leading feature; and I recollect that in our conversations on the subject, you made the remark, which exactly agrees with my own experience, that gymnastics, well conducted, essentially contribute to render children not only cheerful and healthy, which, for moral education, are two all-important points, but also to promote among them a certain spirit of union, and a brotherly feeling, which is most gratifying to the observer: habits of industry, openness and frankness of character, personal courage, and a manly conduct in suffering pain, are also among the natural and constant consequences of an early and a continued practice of exercises on the gymnastic system.

LETTER XXIII.

FEBRUARY 18, 1827.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

PHYSICAL education ought by no means to be confined to those exercises which now receive the denomination of gymnastics. By means of them, strength and dexterity will be acquired in the use of the limbs in general; but particular exercises ought to be devised for the practice of all the senses.

This idea may at first appear a superfluous refinement, or an unnecessary encumbrance of free development. We have acquired the full use of our senses, to be sure, without any special instruction of that sort: but the question is not, whether these exercises are indispensable, but whether, under many circumstances, they will not prove very useful.

How many are there of us, whose eye would, without any assistance, judge correctly of a distance, or of the proportion of the size of different objects? How many are there, who distinguish and recognise the nice shades of colours, without comparing the one with the other; or whose ear will be alive to the slightest variation of sound? Those who are able to do this with some degree of perfection, will be found to derive their facility either from a certain innate

talent, or from constant and labourious practice. Now it is evident that there is a certain superiority in these attainments, which natural talent gives without any exertion, and which instruction could never impart, though attended by the most diligent application. But if practice cannot do every thing, at least it can do much; and the earlier it is began, the easier and the more perfect must be the success.

A regular system of exercises of this description, is yet a desideratum. But it cannot be difficult for a mother to introduce a number of them, calculated to develope and perfectionate the eye and the ear, into the amusements of her children. For it is desirable that every thing of that kind should be treated as an amusement, rather than as any thing else. The greatest liberty must prevail, and the whole must be done with a certain cheerfulness, without which all these exercises, as gymnastics themselves, would become dull, pedantic, and ridiculous.

It will be well done to connect these exercises very early with others, tending to form the taste. It seems not to be sufficiently understood, that good taste and good feelings are kindred to each other, and that they reciprocally confirm each other. Though the ancients have said, that "to study those arts which are suited to a free-born mind, soothes the character, and takes away the roughness of exterior manners," yet little has been done to open a free access to those enjoyments or accomplishments to all, and especially to the majority of the people. If they must not be expected to be able to give much of their attention to subordinate or ornamental pursuits, while so much of it is engrossed

by providing for their first and necessary wants; still this does not furnish a conclusive reason why they should be shut out altogether from every pursuit above the toil of their ordinary avocations.

Yet I know not a more gratifying scene, than to see, as I have seen it among the poor, a mother spreading around her a spirit of silent but serene enjoyment, diffusing among her children a spring of better feelings, and setting the example of removing every thing that might offend the taste, not indeed of a fastidious observer, but yet of one used to move in another sphere. It is difficult to describe by what means this can be effected, But I have seen it under circumstances which did not promise to render it even possible. Of one thing I am certain, that it is only through the true spirit of maternal love that it can be obtained. That feeling, of which I cannot too frequently repeat that it is capable of an elevation to the standard of the very best feelings of human nature, is intimately connected with a happy instinct, that will lead to a path equally remote from listlessness and indolence, as it is from artificial refinement. Refinement and fastidiousness may do much, if upheld by constant watchfulness; a nature, however, a truth will be wanting; and even the casual observer will be struck with a restraint incompatible with an atmosphere of sympathy.

Now that I am on the topic, I will not let the opportunity pass by without speaking of one of the most effective aids of moral education. You are aware that I mean *MUSIC*, and you are not only acquainted with my sentiments on that subject, but you have also observed the very satisfactory results which we have

obtained in our schools. The exertions of my excellent friend Nageli, who has with equal taste and judgment reduced the highest principles of his art to the simplest elements, have enabled us to bring our children to a proficiency, which, on any other plan, must be the work of much time and labour.

But it is not this proficiency which I would describe as a desirable accomplishment in education. It is the marked and most beneficial influence of music on the feelings, which I have always thought and always observed to be most efficient in preparing or attuning, as it were, the mind for the best of impressions. The exquisite harmony of a superior performance, the studied elegance of the execution, may indeed give satisfaction to a connoisseur; but it is the simple and untaught grace of melody which speaks to the heart of every human being. Our own national melodies, which have since time immemorial been resounding in our native vallies, are fraught with reminiscences of the brightest page of our history, and of the most endearing scenes of domestic life. But the effect of music in education is not only to keep alive a national feeling: it goes much deeper; if cultivated in the right spirit, it strikes at the root of every bad or narrow feeling, of every ungenerous or mean propensity, of every emotion unworthy of humanity.

In saying so, I might quote an authority, which commands our attention on account of the elevated character and genius of the man from whom it proceeds. It is well-known, that there was not a more eloquent and warm advocate of the moral virtues of music than the venerable Luther. But though his

has made itself heard, and is still held in the highest esteem among us, yet experience has spoken still louder, and more unquestionably, to the truth of the proposition which he was among the first to vindicate. Experience has long since proved, that a system proceeding upon the principle of sympathy would be imperfect, if it were to deny itself the assistance of that powerful means, of the culture of the heart. Those schools, or those families, in which music has retained the cheerful and chaste character which it is so important that it should preserve, have invariably displayed scenes of moral feeling, and consequently of happiness, which leave no doubt as to the intrinsic value of that art, which has sunk into neglect, or degenerated into abuse, only in the ages of barbarism or depravity.

I need not remind you of the importance of music in engendering and assisting the highest feelings of which man is capable. It is almost universally acknowledged, that Luther has seen the truth, when he pointed out music, devoid of studied pomp and vain ornament, in its solemn and impressive simplicity, as one of the most efficient means of elevating and purifying genuine feelings of devotion.

We have frequently, in our conversations on this subject, been at a loss how to account for the circumstance, that in your own country, though that fact is as generally acknowledged, yet music does not form a more prominent feature in general education. It would seem that the notion prevails, that it would require more time and application than can conveniently be

bestowed upon it, to make its influence extend also on the education of the people.

Now I would appeal, with the same confidence as I would to yourself, to any traveller, whether he has not been struck with the facility, as well as the success with which it is cultivated among us. Indéed, there is scarcely a village school throughout Switzerland, and perhaps there is none throughout Germany or Prussia, in which something is not done for an acquirement at least of the elements of music, on the new and more appropriate plan.

This is a fact which it cannot be difficult to examine, and which it will be impossible to dispute; and I will conclude this letter by expressing the hope which we have been entertaining together, that *this fact will not be overlooked in a country which has never been backward in suggesting or adopting improvement, when founded on facts, and confirmed by experience.**

* The Editor begs leave to observe, that in the Infant Schools something has been attempted in the direction which Pestalozzi recommends. Though he is aware, that in most Infant Schools the musical department will yet be found the most deficient part of the system, still the results are of a nature to give encouragement to the further pursuit of the subject. It is certainly very desirable, that an individual intimately acquainted with the science of music, and at the same time interested in popular education, may undertake to lay down the elementary principles upon which a more successful cultivation of music might proceed. The Editor has much pleasure in stating, that there are at present more than one individual, deeply interested in education, with whom music has been a favourite pursuit, and who are acquainted with the admirable work of Hans Nageli, of Zurich, who have lately

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LETTER XXIV.

FEBRUARY 27, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IN the branch of education of which I have been treating in the two last letters, I conceive that to the elements of music should be subjoined the elements of drawing.

We all know from experience, that among the first manifestations of the faculties of a child, is a desire, and an attempt of imitation. This accounts for the acquirement of language, and for the first imperfect utterance of sounds imitative of music, which is common to most children when they have heard a tune with which they were pleased. The progress in both depends on the greater or smaller portion of attention which children give to the things that surround them, and on their quickness of perception. In the very same way as this applies to the ear and the organs of speech, it applies also to the eye and the

turned their attention to this subject. Nothing can be more gratifying to the friends of popular education, than to see, as we have lately seen in more than one instance, superior talents engaging in that cause from motives of pure benevolence.

employment of the hand. Children who evince some curiosity in the objects brought before their eyes, very soon begin to employ their ingenuity and skill in copying what they have seen. Most children will manage to construct something in imitation of a building, of any materials they can lay hold of.

This desire, which is natural to them, should not be neglected. It is, like all the faculties, capable of regular development. It is therefore well done to furnish children with playthings which will facilitate these their first essays, and occasionally to assist them. No encouragement of that sort is lost upon them, and encouragement should never be withheld, when it promotes innocent pleasure, and when it may lead to useful occupation. To relieve them from the monotonousness of their daily and hourly repeated trifles, and to introduce variety into their little amusements, acts as a stimulus to their ingenuity, and sharpens their observation, while it gains their interest.

As soon as they are able to make the essay, there is nothing so well calculated for this object as some elementary practice of drawing. You have seen the course of preparatory exercises, by which some of my friends have so well succeeded in facilitating these pursuits for quite young children. It would be unreasonable to expect that they should begin by drawing any object before them as a whole. It is necessary to analyse for them the parts and elements of which it consists. Whenever this has been attempted, the progress has been astonishing, and equalled only by the delight with which the children followed this their

favourite pursuit. My friends Ramsauer and Boniface* have undertaken the very useful work, of arranging such a course in its natural progress from the easiest to the most complicated exercises, and the number of schools in which their method has been successfully practised, confirms the experience which we have made at Yverdun of its merits.

The general advantages resulting from an early practice of drawing, are evident to every one. Those who are familiar with the art, are known to look upon almost every object with eyes different, as it were, from a common observer. One who is in the habit of examining the structure of plants, and conversant with a system of botany, will discover a number of distinguishing characteristics of a flower, for instance, which remain wholly unnoticed by one unacquainted with that science. It is from this same reason, that even in common life, a person who is in the habit of drawing, especially from Nature, will easily perceive many circumstances which are commonly overlooked, and form a much more correct impression even of such objects, as he does not stop to examine minutely, than one who has never been taught to look upon what he sees with

* Both these gentlemen have since published several works, the first in German, and the second in French, with illustrations. Their principles, which were first applied in the Pestalozzian Schools, are now very generally adopted in the best schools of Germany and France; and their works, especially that of Ramsauer, would well deserve a translation in English. The superiority of their method has been generally acknowledged by the Englishmen who have seen it practised in the Pestalozzian Institutions.

an intention to re-produce a likeness of it. The attention to the exact shape of the whole, and the proportion of the parts, which is requisite for the taking of an adequate sketch, is converted into a habit, and becomes, in many cases, productive of much instruction and amusement.

In order to attain this habit, it is very material, and almost indispensable, that children should not be confined to copying from another drawing, but from Nature. The impression which the object itself gives, is so much more striking than its appearance in an imitation; it gives a child much more pleasure to be able to exercise his skill in attempting a likeness of what surrounds him, and of what he is interested in, than in labouring at a copy of what is but a copy itself, and has less of life or interest in its appearance.

It is likewise much easier to give an idea of the important subject of light and shade, and of the first principles of perspective, as far as they influence the representation of every object, by placing it immediately before the eye. The assistance which is given should by no means extend to a direction in the execution of every detail; but something should be left to the ingenuity, something also to patience and perseverance: an advantage that has been found out after some fruitless attempts, is not easily forgotten; it gives much satisfaction and encouragement to new efforts; and the joy on the ultimate success derives a zest from previous disappointment.

Next to the exercises of drawing, come those of modelling, in whatever materials may be most conveniently employed. This is frequently productive of

even more amusement. Even where there is no distinguished mechanical talent, the pleasure of being able to do something at least, is, with many, a sufficient excitement : and both drawing and modelling, if taught on principles which are founded in nature, will be of the greatest use when the pupils are to enter upon other branches of instruction.

Of these I shall here only mention two—geometry and geography. The preparatory exercises by which we have introduced a course of geometry, present an analysis of the various combinations under which the elements of form are brought together, and of which every figure or diagram consists. These elements are already familiar to the pupil who has been taught to consider an object with a view to decompose it into its original parts, and to draw them separately. The pupil of course will not be a stranger to the materials, of which he is now to be taught the combinations and proportions. It must be easier to understand the properties of a circle, for instance, or of a square, for one who has not only met with these figures occasionally, but who is already acquainted with the manner in which they are formed. Besides, the doctrine of geometrical solids, which cannot in any degree be satisfactorily taught without illustrative models, is much better understood, and much deeper impressed on the mind, when the pupils have some idea of the construction of the models, and when they are able to work out at least those which are less complicated.*

* Different sets of models, such as Pestalozzi alludes to, are sold by Mr. Larkin, Gee Street, Somerstown. It will be found useful to let the pupils imitate them, on rather a larger scale, in chalk, or in thin paste-board.

In geography, the drawing of outline maps is an exercise which ought not to be neglected in any school. It gives the most accurate idea of the proportional extent, and the general position, of the different countries; it conveys a more distinct notion than any description, and it leaves the most permanent impression on the memory.

LETTER XX V.

MARCH 5, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

To the courses of exercises which I have recommended, I anticipate that an objection will be raised, which it is necessary for me to meet, before I proceed to speak of intellectual education.

Granting that these exercises may be, as the phrase is, useful in their way; granting even, that it might be desirable to see some of the knowledge they are intended to convey, diffused among all classes of society; yet where, it will be asked, and by what means can they be expected to become general among any other than the higher classes? There you may expect to find mothers competent, if at all inclined, to undertake the superintendence of such exercises with their children. But, considering the present state of things, is it not absolutely chimerical to imagine, that among the people mothers should be found, who were qualified to do anything for their children in that direction?

To this objection I would answer, in the first place, that it is not always legitimate to conclude from the

present state of things to the future ; and whenever, as in the case before us, the present state of things can be proved to be faulty, and at the same time capable of improvement, every friend of humanity will concur with me in saying, that such a conclusion is inadmissible.

It is inadmissible ; for experience speaks against it. The page of history, to a thinking observer, presents mankind labouring under the influence of a chain of prejudice, of which the links are successively broken.

The most interesting events in history are but the consummation of things which had been deemed impossible. It is in vain to assign limits to the improvements of ingenuity ; *but it is still more so, to circumscribe the exertions of benevolence.*

Such a conclusion, then, is inadmissible. And history speaks more directly to the point. The most consequential facts plead in favour of our wishes and our hopes. The most enlightened, the most active philanthropists, two thousand years ago, could not have foreseen the change that has taken place in the intellectual world : they could not have anticipated those facilities, by which not only the research of a few is encouraged, but by which the practical results of that research are, with wonderful rapidity, communicated to thousands in the remotest countries of the globe. They could not have foreseen the glorious invention, by which ignorance and superstition have been driven out of their strong hold, and knowledge and truth diffused in the most universal and the most effective channels. They could not have foreseen,

that a spirit of enquiry would be excited even among those who had formerly been doomed to blind belief, and to passive obedience.

Indeed, if there is one feature by which this present age bids fair to redeem its character, and to heal the wounds which it has inflicted on the suffering nations, it is this,—that we see efforts making in every direction, with a zeal, and to an extent hitherto unparalleled, to assist the people in acquiring that portion of intellectual independency, without which the true dignity of the human character cannot be maintained, nor its duties adequately fulfilled. There is something so cheering in the prospect of seeing the number of those for whom it is destined, extending with the range of knowledge itself, that there is scarcely a field left, of which men of superior talent have not undertaken to cull the flowers, and to store the fruits for those who have not time or faculty to toil at the elements, or follow up the refinements of science; and the still more material object, to facilitate the first steps, to lay the foundation, to ensure the slow but solid progress, and to do this in the manner best adapted to the nature of the human mind, and to the development of its faculties:—this object has been pursued with an interest and an ardour, that even the results which I have seen in my own immediate neighbourhood are a sufficient pledge, that the pursuit will not be abandoned, and that it is not now far from its ultimate success.

This prospect is cheering: but, my dear friend, it is not upon this prospect that I have built the hopes of my life. It is not the diffusion of knowledge, whether

it be grudgingly doled out in schools on the old plan, or more liberally supplied in establishments on a new principle, or submitted to the examination, and laid open for the improvement of the adults;—it is not the diffusion of knowledge alone to which I look up for the welfare of this, or of any generation. No: unless we succeed in giving a new impulse, and raising the tone of DOMESTIC EDUCATION; unless an atmosphere of sympathy, elevated by moral and religious feeling, be diffused there; unless maternal love be rendered more instrumental in early education, than any other agent; unless mothers will consent to follow the call of their own better feelings more readily than those of pleasure or of thoughtless habit; unless they will consent to be mothers, and to act as mothers—unless such be the character of education, all our hopes and exertions can end only in disappointment.

Those have indeed widely mistaken the meaning of all my plans, and of those of my friends, who suppose that in our labours for popular education, we have not an higher end in view, than the improvement of a system of instruction, or the perfection, as it were, of the gymnastics of the intellect. We have been busily engaged in reforming the schools, for we consider them as essential in the progress of education: but we consider the fireside circle as far more essential. We have done all in our power to bring up children with a view to become teachers, and we have every reason to congratulate the schools that were benefitted by this plan: but we have thought it the most important feature, and the first duty of our own schools, and of every school, to develope in the pupils confided to our

care those feelings, and to store their minds with that knowledge, which, at a more advanced period of life, may enable them to give all their heart, and the unwearied use of their powers, to the diffusion of the true spirit which should prevail in a domestic circle. In short, whoever has the welfare of the rising generation at heart, cannot do better than consider as his highest object, the EDUCATION OF MOTHERS.

LETTER XXVI.

MARCH 15, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

LET me repeat, that we cannot expect any real improvement in education, and improvement that shall be felt throughout an extensive sphere, and that shall continue to spread in the progress of time, increasing in vigour as it proceeds,—we cannot expect any improvement of that character, unless we begin by *educating mothers*.

It is their duty, in the domestic circle, to do what school instruction has not the means of accomplishing; to give to every individual child that degree of attention, which in a school is absorbed in the management of the whole; to let their heart speak in cases where the heart is the best judge; to gain by affection, what authority could never have commanded.

But it is their duty also to turn all the stock of their knowledge to account, and to let their children have the benefit of it.

I am aware that, under the present circumstances, many mothers would either declare themselves, or would be looked upon by others, as incompetent to attempt any such thing; as so poor in knowledge, and so unpractised in communicating knowledge, that such an undertaking on their part would appear as vain and presumptuous.

Now this is a fact, which, as far as experience goes, I am bound to deny. I am not now speaking of those classes, or individuals, whose education has been, if not very diligently, at least in some measure attended to. I have now in view a mother, whose education has, from some circumstances or other, been totally neglected. I will suppose one, who is even ignorant of reading and writing, though in no country in which the schools are in a proper state you would meet with an individual deficient in this respect. I will add, a young and unexperienced mother.

Now I will venture to say, that this poor, and wholly ignorant, this young and unexperienced mother, is *not quite destitute* of the means of assisting even in the intellectual development of her child.

However small may be the stock of her experience, however moderate her own faculties, she must be aware, that she is acquainted with an infinite number of facts, such, we will say, as they occur in common life, to which her infant is yet a stranger. She must be aware that it will be useful to the infant to become soon acquainted with some of them, such, for instance, as refer to things with which it is likely to come into contact. She must feel herself able to give her child the possession of a variety of names, simply by bringing the objects themselves before the child, pronouncing the names, and making the child repeat them. She must feel herself able to bring such objects before the child in a sort of natural order—the different parts, for instance, of a fruit. Let no one despise these things, because they are little. There was a time when we were ignorant even of the least of them; and there are

those to whom we have reason to be thankful for teaching us these little things.

But I do not mean to say, that a mother should stop there. Even the mother of whom we are speaking, that wholly ignorant and unexperienced mother, is capable of going much farther, and of adding a variety of knowledge which is really useful. After she has exhausted the stock of objects which presented themselves first, after the child has acquired the names of them, and is able to distinguish their parts, it may probably occur to her, that something more might still be said on every one of these objects. She will find herself able to describe them to the child with regard to form, size, colour, softness or hardness of the outside, sound when touched, and so on. She has now gained a material point; from the mere knowledge of the names of objects, she has led the infant to a knowledge of their qualities and properties. Nothing can be more natural for her than to go on and compare different objects with regard to these qualities, and the greater or smaller degree in which they belong to the objects. If the former exercises were adapted to cultivate the memory, these are calculated to form the observation and judgment. She may still go much farther: she is able to tell her child the reasons of things, and the causes of facts. She is able to inform it of the origin, and the duration, and the consequences of a variety of objects. The occurrences of every day, and of every hour, will furnish her with materials for this sort of instruction. Its use is evident; it teaches the child to inquire after the causes, and accustoms it to think of the consequences of things. I shall have an opportunity in another place

to speak of moral and religious instruction; I will therefore only remark, in a few words, that this last-mentioned class of exercises, which may be varied and extended in an almost endless series, will give frequent occasion for the simplest illustration of truths belonging to that branch. It will make the child reflect on the consequences of actions; it will render the mind familiar with thought; and it will frequently lead to recognise, in the objects before the child, the effects of the infinite wisdom of that Being, whom, long before, the piety of the mother, if genuine, must have led him to revere, and to love "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and with all his mind."

I am afraid that the enumeration of these first essays of a mother will be found tedious by other readers than yourself, whom I have never seen weary of watching nature, and drawing instruction from the inexhaustible spring of experience. I think that we sympathise on this subject, that we feel greater interest in the unsophisticated consciousness of a pure intention, than in the most splendid exhibition of refinement of knowledge.

And I know not a motive, which might render those efforts more interesting, than the desire of a mother to do all in her power for the mental as well as the physical and moral development of her children. However circumscribed her means, and however limited at first may be her success, still there is something that will and must prompt her not to rest, that will stimulate her to new efforts, and that will at

last crown them with fruits which are the more gratifying, the more they were difficult to obtain.

Experience has shown, that mothers, in that seemingly forlorn situation which I have described, have succeeded beyond their own expectation. I look upon this as a new proof for the fact, that nothing is too difficult for maternal love, animated by a consciousness of its purity, and elevated by a confidence in the power of Him who has inspired the mother's heart with that feeling. I do indeed consider it as a free gift of the Creator, and I firmly believe, that in the same measure as maternal love is ardent and indefatigable, in the same measure as it is inspired with energy, and enhanced by faith,—I firmly believe, that in the same measure maternal love will be strengthened in its exertions, and supplied with means, even where it appears most destitute.

Though, as I have shown above, it is by no means so difficult to direct the attention of children to useful objects, yet nothing is more common than the complaint, "I can do nothing with children." If this comes from an individual who is not called upon by his peculiar situation to occupy himself with education, it is but fair to suppose, that he will be able to make himself more useful in another direction, than he could have done by a laborious and persevering application to a task, for which he is neither predisposed by inclination, nor fitted by eminent talent. But those words should never come from a mother. A mother is called upon to give her attention to that subject. It is her duty to do

so; the voice of conscience in her own breast will tell her that it is; and the consciousness of a duty does never exist without the qualification to fulfil it; nor has a duty ever been undertaken with the spirit of courage, of confidence, of love, that has not been ultimately crowned with success.

LETTER XXVII.

MARCH 20, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IF ever an uneducated and totally unassisted mother has it in her power to do so much for her child, how much better qualified must she be, and how much more confidently may she look forward to the results of her maternal exertions, if her faculties have been properly developed, and her steps guided by the experience of those who had engaged in that work before her.

The fact, therefore, which I stated in my last letter, far from rendering my proposition questionable, goes directly to confirm its validity, and to illustrate its expediency. I therefore repeat it, and I would address it in the strongest language to all those who, like myself, are desirous of bringing about a change in our present insufficient system of education. If you really wish to embark with your facilities, your time, your talents, your influence, in a cause likely to benefit a large portion of your species—if you wish not to be busy in suggesting palliatives, but in effecting a permanent cure of the evils under which thousands have sunk, and hundreds of thousands are still suffering; if

you wish not merely to erect an edifice, that may attract by its splendour, and commemorate your name for awhile, but which shall pass away like "the baseless fabric of a vision;" if, on the contrary, you prefer solid improvement to momentary effect, and the lasting benefit of many, to the solitary gratification of striking results; let not your attention be diverted by the apparent wants—let it not be totally engrossed by the subordinate ones—but let it at once be directed to the great and general, though little known source from which good or evil flows in quantity incalculable, and rapidity unparalleled—to the manner in which the earliest years of childhood are passed, and to the education of those to whose care they are, or ought to be consigned.

Of all institutions, the most useful, is one in which the great business of education is not merely made a means subservient to the various purposes of ordinary life, but in which it is viewed as an object in itself deserving of the most serious attention, and to be brought to the highest perfection; a school, in which the pupils are taught to act as teachers, and educated to act as educators; a school, above all, in which the FEMALE CHARACTER is at an early period developed in that direction, which enables it to take so prominent a part in early education.

To effect this, it is necessary that the female character should be thoroughly understood and adequately appreciated. And on this subject, nothing can give a more satisfactory illustration, than the observation of a mother, who is conscious of her duties, and qualified to fulfil them. In such a mother, the moral dignity of

character, the suavity of her manners, and the firmness of her principles, will not more command our admiration, than the happy mixture of judgment and feeling, which constitutes the simple, but unerring standard of her actions.

It is the great problem in female education, to effect this happy union in the mind, which is equally far from imposing any restraint on the feelings, as it is from warping or biassing the judgment. The marked preponderance of feeling, which is manifested in the female character, requires not only the most clear-sighted, but also the kindest attention, from those who wish to bring it into harmony with the development of the faculties of the intellect and the will.

It is a mere prejudice to suppose, that the acquirement of knowledge, and the cultivation of the intellect, must either not be solid and comprehensive, or that they are apt to take away from the female character its simplicity, and all that renders it truly amiable. Every thing depends on the motive from which, and the spirit in which, knowledge is acquired. Let that motive be one that does honour to human nature, and let that spirit be the same which is concomitant to all the graces of the female character,—

“ Not obvious, not obtrusive,—but retired,”—

and there will be modesty to ensure solidity of knowledge, and delicacy to guard against the misdirection of sentiment.

For an example, I might refer to one of the numerous instances, which are not the less striking, because they are not extensively known, in which a mother has

devoted much of her time, and best abilities, to the acquirement of some branches of knowledge, in which her own education had been defective, but which she conceived to be valuable enough to be brought forward in the education of her own children. This has been the case with individuals highly accomplished in many respects, but still alive to every defect, and desirous of supplying it, if not for their own, at least for the benefit of their children.

And no mother has ever been known to have repented of any pains that she took to qualify herself for the most perfect education of those nearest and dearest to her heart. Even without anticipating the future accomplishment of her wishes, by their progress in the path in which she has undertaken to guide them, she is amply repaid by the delight immediately arising from the task,

———“ To rear the tender thought,
And teach the young idea how to shoot.”

I have here supposed the most powerful motive, that of maternal love ; but it will be the task of early education to supply motives, which even at a tender age may excite an interest in mental exertion, and yet be allied to the best feelings of human nature.

LETTER XXVIII.

MARCH 27, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IF a mother is desirous of taking an active part in the intellectual education of her children, I would first direct her attention to the necessity of considering, not only what sort of knowledge, but in what manner that knowledge should be communicated to the infant mind. For her purpose, the latter consideration is even more essential than the former; for, however excellent the information may be, which she wishes to impart, it will depend on the mode of her doing it, whether it will at all gain access to the mind, or whether it will remain unprofitable, neither suiting the faculties, nor being apt to excite the interest of the child.

In this respect, a mother should be able perfectly to distinguish between the mere action of the memory, and that of the other faculties of the mind.

To the want of this distinction I think we may safely ascribe much of the waste of time, and the deceptive exhibition of apparent knowledge, which is so frequent in schools, both of a higher and of lower character. It is a mere fallacy, to conclude, or to pretend, that knowledge has been acquired, from the circumstance, that terms have been committed to the

memory, which, if rightly understood, convey the expression of knowledge. This condition, *if rightly understood*, which is the most material, is the most generally overlooked. No doubt, a proceeding of this sort, when words are committed to the memory, without an adequate explanation being either given or required, is the most commodious system for the indolence or ignorance of those who practise upon it as a system of instruction. Add to which, the powerful stimulus of vanity in the pupils,—the hope of distinction and reward in some,—the fear of exposure or punishment in others,—and we shall have the principal motives before us, owing to which this system, in spite of its wretchedness, has so long been patronized by those who do not think at all, and tolerated by those who do not sufficiently think for themselves.

What I have said just now, of the exercise of the memory, exclusive of a well-regulated exercise of the understanding, applies more especially to the manner in which the dead languages have long been, and in some places still are, taught; a system, of which, taking it all in all, with its abstruse and unintelligible rules, and its compulsive discipline, it is difficult to say whether it is more absurd in an intellectual, or more detestable in a moral point of view.*

* "The boasted liberty we talk of, is but a mean reward for the long servitude, the many heart-aches and terrors to which our childhood is exposed in going through a grammar school."—*Spectator*, Vol. II. No. 157.

On this subject, see *Locke on Education*, § 163—177, p. 243—274.

Lord Kames: "In teaching a language it is the universal practice to begin with grammar, and to do every thing by rule. I affirm this to be

If such a system, enforcing the partial exercise of the memory, is so absurd in its application, and so detrimental in its consequences, at a period when the intellect may be supposed to be able to make some progress at least, without being so constantly and anxiously attended to; an exclusive cultivation of the memory must be still more misapplied at the tender age when the intellect is only just dawning, when the faculty of discerning is yet unformed, and unable to consign to the memory the notions of separate objects in their distinction from each other. For a mother to guard against an error of this kind, the first rule is, to teach always by THINGS, rather than by WORDS. Let there be as few objects as possible named to the infant, unless you are prepared to show the objects themselves.

a most preposterous method. Grammar is contrived for men, not for children. Its natural place is between language and logic: it ought to close lectures on the former, and to be the first lectures on the latter. It is a gross deception, that a language cannot be taught without rules. A boy who is flogged into grammar-rules, makes a shift to apply them; but he applies them by rote like a parrot. Boys, for the knowledge they acquire of a language, are not indebted to dry rules, but to practice and observation. *To this day I never think without shuddering of Disputer's grammar, which was my daily persecution during the most important period of life.* Curiosity, when I was farther advanced in years, prompted me to look at a book that had given me so much trouble. At this time I understood the rules perfectly; and was astonished that formerly they had been to us *words without meaning*, which I had been taught to apply mechanically, without knowing how or why. Deplorable it is, that young creatures should be so punished without being guilty of any fault—more than sufficient to produce a disgust at learning, instead of promoting it. Whence then this absurdity of persecuting boys with grammar rules?" &c.—*Loose Hints on Education.* § ix. p 279.

If this is the case, the name will be committed to the memory, together with the recollection of the impression which the object produced on the senses. It is an old saying, and a very true one, that our attention is much more forcibly attracted, and more permanently fixed, by objects which have been brought before our eyes, than by others, of which we have merely gathered some notion from hearsay and description, or from the mention of a name.

But if a mother is to teach by THINGS, she must recollect also, that to the formation of an idea, more is requisite, than the bringing the object before the senses. Its qualities must be explained; its origin must be accounted for; its parts must be described, and their relation to the whole ascertained; its use, its effects or consequences, must be stated. All this must be done, at least, in a manner sufficiently clear and comprehensive to enable the child to distinguish the object from other objects, and to account for the distinction which is made.

It is natural, that the degree of perfection, with which the formation of ideas on this plan can be facilitated, depends upon circumstances, which are not always under the controul of a mother; but something of the kind should be attempted, and must be, wherever education is intended to take a higher character than mere mechanical training of the memory.

Of objects which cannot be brought before the child in reality, pictures should be introduced. An instruction founded on pictures will always be found a favorite branch with children, and if this curiosity is

well directed, and judiciously satisfied, it will prove one of the most useful and instructive.

Whenever the knowledge of an abstract idea, which will not of course admit of any representation of that kind, is to be communicated to the child, on the same principle an equivalent of that representation should be given by an exemplification, through the medium of a fact laid before the child. This is the original intention, and the use of moral tales; and this, too, agrees with the excellent old adage, "that the way by precept is long and laborious, that by example short and easy."

LETTER XXIX.

APRIL 4, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

THE second rule that I would give to a mother, respecting the early development of the infant mind, is this: Let the child not only be *acted upon*, but let him be an *agent* in intellectual education.

I shall explain my meaning:—Let the mother bear in mind, that her child has not only the faculties of attention to, and retention of, certain ideas or facts, but also a faculty of reflection, independent of the thoughts of others. It is well done to make a child read, and write, and learn, and repeat,—but it is still better to make a child THINK. We may be able to turn to account the opinions of others, and we may find it valuable or advantageous to be acquainted with them: we may profit by their light; but we can render ourselves most useful to others, and we shall be entitled to the character of valuable members of society, by the efforts of our own mind; by the result of our own investigations; by those views, and their application, which we may call our intellectual property.

I am not now speaking of those leading ideas, which are from time to time thrown out, and by which

science is advanced, or society benefitted at large. I am speaking of that stock of intellectual property, which every one, even the most unpretending individual, and in the humblest walks of life, may acquire. I am speaking of that habit of reflection, which guards against unthinking conduct under any circumstances, and which is always active to examine that which is brought before the mind; that habit of reflection, which excludes the self-sufficiency of ignorance, or the levity of "a little learning;"—which may lead an individual to the modest acknowledgment, that he knows but little, and to the honest consciousness that he knows that little well. To engender this habit, nothing is so effective, as an early development, in the infant mind, of thought,—regular, self-active thought.

Let not the mother suffer herself to be detained from this task, by the objections of those who deem the infant mind altogether incapable of any exertion of that kind. I will venture to say, that those who propose that objection, though they may be the profoundest thinkers, or the greatest theorists, will be found to have no *practical* knowledge whatsoever of the subject, nor any moral interest in the investigation of it. And I, for one, would trust more in the experimental knowledge of a mother, proceeding from exertions to which she was prompted by maternal feeling—in that experimental knowledge, even of an illiterate mother, I would trust more, than in the theoretical speculations of the most ingenious philosophers. There are cases, in which sound sense, and a warm heart, sees farther than a highly refined, cold, and calculating head.

I would therefore call upon the mother to begin her task, in spite of any objections that may be raised. It will be enough if she is persuaded to *begin*; she will then continue of herself; she will derive such gratification from her task, that she will never think of relaxing.

While she unfolds the treasures of the infant mind, and uncloses the world of hitherto slumbering thought, she will not envy the assurance of philosophers, who would have the human mind to be an "universal blank." Engaged in a task, which calls into activity all the energies of her mind, and all the affections of her heart, she will smile at their dictatorial speculations, and their supercilious theories. Without troubling herself about the knotty question, whether there are any *innate ideas*, she will be content if she succeeds in developing the *innate faculties of the mind*.

If a mother asks for the designation of the subjects which might be profitably used as vehicles for the development of thought, I would answer her, that any subject will do, if it be treated in a manner suitable to the faculties of the child. It is the great art in teaching, never to be at a loss for the choice of an object for the illustration of a truth. There is not an object so trivial, that in the hands of a skilful teacher might not become interesting, if not from its own nature, at least from the mode of treating it. To a child every thing is new. The charm of novelty, it is true, soon wears off; and if there is not the fastidiousness of matured years, there is at least the impatience of infancy to contend with. But then there is for the teacher the great advantage of a combination of simple elements, which may diversify the subject without dividing the attention.

If I say, that any subject will do for the purpose, I mean this to be understood literally. Not only there is not one of the little incidents in the life of a child, in his amusements and recreations, in his relations to his parents and friends and playfellows,—but there is not actually any thing within the reach of the child's attention, whether it belong to nature, or to the employments and arts of life, that might not be made the object of a lesson, by which some useful knowledge might be imparted, and, which is still more important, by which the child might be familiarised with the habit of thinking on what he sees, and speaking after he has thought.

The mode of doing this, is not by any means to talk much *to* a child, but to enter into conversation *with* a child; not to address to him many words, however familiar or well chosen, but to bring him to express himself on the subject; not to exhaust the subject, but to question the child about it, and to let him find out, and correct, the answers. It would be ridiculous to expect, that the volatile spirits of an infant could be brought to follow any lengthy explanations. The attention of a child is deadened by long expositions, but roused by animated questions.

Let these questions be short, clear, and intelligible. Let them not merely lead the child to repeat, in the same, or in varied terms, what he has heard just before. Let them excite him to observe what is before him, to recollect what he has learned, and to muster his little stock of knowledge for materials for an answer. Show him a certain quality in one thing, and let him find out the same in others. Tell him, that the shape of a

ball is called round ; and if, accordingly, you bring him to point out other objects to which the same predicament belongs, you have employed him more usefully than by the most perfect discourse on rotundity. In the one instance he would have had to listen, and to recollect ; in the other, he has to observe, and to think.

LETTER XXX.

APRIL 10, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

WHEN I recommend to a mother to avoid *wearying* a child by her instructions, I do not wish to encourage the notion, that instruction should always take the character of an amusement, or even of a play. I am convinced, that such a notion, where it is entertained and acted upon by a teacher, will for ever preclude solidity of knowledge, and from a want of sufficient exertions on the part of the pupils, will lead to that very result which I wish to avoid by my principle of a constant employment of the thinking powers.

A child must very early in life be taught a lesson, which frequently comes too late, and is then a most painful one,—that exertion is indispensable for the attainment of knowledge. But a child should not be taught to look upon exertion as an unavoidable *evil*. The motive of *fear* should not be made a stimulus to exertion. It will destroy the interest, and will speedily create disgust.

This *interest* in study, is the first thing which a teacher, and in the instances before us, which a mother should endeavour to excite and keep alive. There are

scarcely any circumstances, in which a want of application in children does not proceed from a want of interest; and there are perhaps none, under which a want of interest does not originate in the mode of treating adopted by the teacher. I would go as far as to lay it down for a rule, that whenever children are inattentive, and apparently take no interest in a lesson, the teacher should always first look to himself for the reason. When a quantity of dry matter is before a child, when a child is doomed to listen in silence to lengthy explanations, or to go through exercises which have nothing in themselves to relieve or attract the mind; this is a tax upon his spirits, which a teacher should make it a point to abstain from imposing. In the same manner, if the child, from the imperfection of his reasoning powers, or his unacquaintance with facts, is unable to enter into the sense, or to follow the chain of ideas in a lesson; when he is made to hear, or to repeat, what to him is but "sound without sense;"—this is perfectly absurd. And when to all this the fear of punishment is added,—besides the tedium, which in itself is punishment enough,—this becomes absolutely cruel.

Of all tyrants, it is well known that little tyrants are the most cruel; and of all little tyrants, the most cruel are *school tyrants*. Now, in all civilized countries, cruelty of every description is forbidden, and even cruelty to animals is very properly punished, in some by the law of the land, and in all stigmatised by public opinion. How then comes CRUELTY TO CHILDREN to be so generally overlooked, or rather thought a matter of course?

Some, forsooth, will tell us, that their own measures

are wonderfully humane,—that their punishments are less severe,—or that they have done away with corporal punishments. But it is not to the severity of them that I object—nor would I venture to assert, in an unqualified manner, that corporal punishments are inadmissible, under any circumstances in education. But I do object to their application—I do object to the principle, *that the children are punished, when the master, or the system, is to blame.*

As long as this shall continue,—as long as teachers will not take the trouble, or will not be found qualified, to inspire their pupils with a living interest in their studies—they must not complain of the want of attention, nor even of the aversion to instruction, which some of them may manifest. Could we witness the indescribable tedium which must oppress the juvenile mind, while the weary hours are slowly passing away, one by one, in an occupation which they can neither relish, nor understand its use; could we remember the same scenes which our own childhood has undergone, we would then no longer be surprised at the remissness of the school-boy, “creeping, like snail, unwillingly to school.”

In saying this, I do not mean to make myself the advocate of idleness, or of those irregularities which will now and then be met with even in the best conducted schools. But I would suggest, that the best means to prevent them from becoming general, is, to adopt a better mode of instruction, by which the children are less left to themselves, less thrown upon the unwelcome employment of passive listening, less harshly treated for little and excusable failings,—but

more roused by questions, animated by illustrations, interested and won by kindness.

There is a most remarkable reciprocal action between the interest which the teacher takes, and that which he communicates to his pupils. If he is not with his whole mind present at the subject; if he does not care whether it is understood or not, whether his manner is liked or not, he will never fail of alienating the affections of his pupils, and of rendering them indifferent to what he says. But real interest taken in the task of instruction—kind words, and kinder feelings—the very expression of the features, and the glance of the eye,—are never lost upon children.

LETTER XXXI.

APRIL 17, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

You are aware of the nature of those exercises which were adopted at my suggestion, as calculated to employ the mind usefully, and to prepare it for further pursuits, by eliciting thought, and forming the intellect.

I would call them preparatory exercises, in more than one respect. They embrace the elements of number, form, and language; and whatever ideas we may have to acquire in the course of our life, they are all introduced through the medium of one of these three departments.

The relations and proportions of number and form, constitute the natural measure of all those impressions which the mind receives from without. They are the measures, and comprehend the qualities, of the material world; form being the measure of space, and number the measure of time. Two or more objects, distinguished from each other, as existing separately in space, pre-suppose an idea of their forms, or in other words, of the exact space which they occupy; distinguished from each other as existing at different times, they come under the denomination of number.

The reason why I would so early call the attention of children to the elements of number and form, is, besides their general usefulness, that they admit of a most perspicuous treatment—a treatment, of course, far different from that in which they are but too often involved, and rendered utterly unpalatable to those who are by no means deficient in abilities.

The elements of Number, or preparatory exercises of Calculation, should always be taught, by submitting to the eye of the child certain objects representing the units. A child can conceive the idea of two balls, two roses, two books; but it cannot conceive the idea of “Two” in the abstract. How would you make the child understand, that two and two make four, unless you show it to him first in reality? To begin by abstract notions, is absurd and detrimental, instead of being conducive. The result is, at best, that the child can do the thing, by rote—without understanding it; a fact, which does not reflect on the child, but on the teacher, who knows not a higher character of instruction, than mere mechanical training.

If the elements are thus clearly and intelligibly taught, it will always be easy to go on to more difficult parts, remembering always, that the whole should be done by *questions*. As soon as you have given to the child a knowledge of the names by which the numbers are distinguished, you may appeal on it, to answer any question of simple addition, or subtraction, or multiplication, or division, performing the operation in reality, by means of a certain number of objects, balls for instance, which will serve in the place of units.

It has been objected, that children who had been used to a constant and palpable exemplification of the units, by which they were enabled to execute the solution of arithmetical questions, would never be able afterwards to follow the problems of calculation in the abstract, their balls, or other representatives, being taken from them.

Now, experience has shown, that those very children, who had acquired the first elements in the palpable and familiar method described, had two great advantages over others. First, they were perfectly aware, not only what they were doing, but also of the reason why. They were acquainted with the principle on which the solution depended; they were not merely following a formula, by rote; the state of the question changed, they were not puzzled, as those are, who see only as far as their mechanical rule goes, and not farther. This, while it produced confidence, and a feeling of safety, gave them also much delight—a difficulty overcome, with a consciousness of a felicitous effort, always prompts to the undertaking of a new one.

The second advantage was, that children well versed in those illustrative elementary exercises, afterwards displayed great skill in *head-calculation* (*calcul de tête*). Without repairing to their slate, or paper, without making any memorandum of figures, they not only performed operations with large numbers, but they arranged and solved questions, which at first might have appeared involved, even had the assistance of memorandums, or an execution on paper, been allowed.

Of the numerous travellers of your nation, who did

me the honour to visit my establishment, there was none, however little he might be disposed or qualified to enter into a consideration of the whole of my plan, who did not express his astonishment at the perfect ease, and the quickness, with which arithmetical problems, such as the visitors used to propose, were solved. I do not mention this, and I did not then feel any peculiar satisfaction, on account of the display with which it was connected, though the acknowledgment of strangers can by no means be indifferent to one who wishes to see his plan judged of by its results. But the reason why I felt much interested and gratified by the impression which that department of the school invariably produced, was, that it singularly confirmed the fitness and utility of our elementary course. It went a great way, at least, with me, to make me hold fast the principle, that the infant mind should be acted upon by illustrations taken from reality, not by rules taken from abstraction; that we ought to teach by THINGS more than by WORDS.

In the exercises concerning the elements of form, my friends have most successfully revived and extended what the ancients called the *analytical method*—the mode of eliciting facts by problems, instead of stating them in theories; of elucidating the origin of them, instead of merely commenting on their existence; of leading the mind to invent, instead of resting satisfied with the inventions of others. So truly beneficial, so stimulating is that employment to the mind, that we have learned fully to appreciate the principle of Plato, that whoever wished to apply with success to Metaphysics, ought to prepare himself by the study of

Geometry. It is not the acquaintance with certain qualities or proportions, of certain forms and figures, (though, for many purposes, this is applicable in practical life, and conducive to the advancement of science,) but it is the precision of reasoning, and the ingenuity of invention, which, springing as it does from a familiarity with those exercises, qualifies the intellect for exertion of every kind.

In exercises of number and form, less abstraction is at first required, than in similar ones in language. But I would insist on the necessity of a careful instruction in the maternal language. Of foreign tongues, or of the dead languages, I think that they ought to be studied, by all means, by those to whom a knowledge of them may become useful, or who are so circumstanced, that they may indulge a predilection for them, if their taste or habits lead that way. But I know not of one single exception that I would make of the principle, that, as early as possible, a child should be led to contract an intimate acquaintance with, and make himself perfectly master of, his native tongue.

Charles the Fifth used to say, that as many languages as a man possessed, so often was he man. How far this may be true, I will not now inquire: but thus much I know to be a fact, that the mind is deprived of its first instrument or organ, as it were, that its functions are interrupted, and its ideas confused, when there is a want of perfect acquaintance and mastery of at least *one language*. The friends of oppression, of darkness, of prejudice, cannot do better, nor have they at any time neglected the point, than to stifle the power and facility of free, manly, and well-

practised speaking; nor can the friends of light and liberty do better, and it were desirable that they were more assiduous in the cause, than to procure to every one, to the poorest as well as to the richest, a facility, if not of elegance, at least of frankness and energy of speech—a facility, which would enable them to collect and clear up their vague ideas, to embody those which are distinct, and which would awaken a thousand new ones.*

* It had been the intention of the Editor to subjoin a concise account of those exercises, which PESTALOZZI has but alluded to in the last Letters. He is aware, that the statements made in them, will not in any way be sufficient, for readers wholly unacquainted with the subject, to form an adequate idea of what constitutes a very prominent feature in the Pestalozzian system. The Editor, however, finding that, in order to do justice to the subject, he would be obliged to enter into a greater number of details, than the plan and size of the present publication would conveniently admit, begs to refer once more to a little work, which he has frequently alluded to, as by far the most useful and distinguished performance, in English, connected with PESTALOZZI's views. The "Hints to Parents" contain the most excellent manual of exercises on number, form, and language, drawn up, as they profess to be, "in PESTALOZZI's spirit." The merit of that little work, and the practical applicability of the plan which it details, have met with so general acknowledgments on the part of those who have followed that plan in the education of their own children, that the Editor is confident, that all those who feel disposed to give their attention to them, will find the greatest satisfaction in perusing, and availing themselves of the "Hints to Parents."

LETTER XXXII.

APRIL 25, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

NEED I point out to you the motive from which I have said thus much on the early attention to be paid to physical and intellectual education? Need I remind you, that I consider these branches merely as leading to an higher aim,—to qualify the human being to the free and full use of all the faculties implanted by the Creator,—and to direct all these faculties towards the perfection of the whole being of man, that he may be enabled to act, in his peculiar station, as an instrument of that all-wise and almighty Power, that has called him into life. This is the view, which Education should lead an individual to take of his relation to his Maker,—a view, which will at once give him humility to acknowledge the imperfection of his attempts, and the weakness of his power—and inspire him with the courage of an unshaken confidence in the source of all that is good and true.

In relation to society, man should be qualified by education to be a useful member of it. In order to be truly useful, it is necessary that he should be truly *independent*. Whether that independence may arise

from his circumstances, or whether it be acquired by the honourable use of his talents, or whether it be owing to more laborious exertion and frugal habits, it is clear, that true independence must rise and fall with the dignity of his moral character, rather than with affluent circumstances, or intellectual superiority, or indefatigable exertion. A state of bondage, or of self-merited poverty, is not more degrading, than a state of dependence on considerations which betray littleness of mind, or want of moral energy, or of honourable feeling. An individual, whose actions bear the stamp of independence of mind, cannot but be an useful, as well as an esteemed member of society. He fills up a certain place in society, belonging to himself and to no other, because he has obtained it by merit, and secured it by character. His talents, his time, his opportunities, or his influence, are all given to a certain end. And even in the humbler walks of life, it has always been acknowledged, that there were individuals, who by the intelligent, the frank, the honourable character of their demeanour, and by the meritorious tendency of their exertions, deserved to be mentioned together with those whose names were illustrated by the halo of noble birth, and by the still brighter glory of genius or merit. That such instances are but exceptions, and that these exceptions are so few, is owing to the system of education which generally prevails, and which is little calculated to promote independence of character.

Considering man as an individual, education should contribute in giving him *happiness*. The feeling of happiness does not arise from exterior circumstances; it is a state of the mind, a consciousness of harmony

both with the inward and the outward world : it assigns their due limits to the desires, and it proposes the highest aim to the faculties of man. For happy is he, who can bring his desires within the measure of his means, and who can resign to every individual and selfish wish, without giving up his content and repose, —whose feeling of general satisfaction is not dependent on individual gratification. And happy again is he, who, whenever self is out of the question, and the higher perfection of his better nature, or the best interests of his race, are at stake,—happy is he, who then knows of no limits to his efforts, and who can bring them to keep pace with his most sanguine hopes ! The sphere of happiness is unbounded, it is extending as the views are enlarged ; it is elevated as the feelings of the heart are raised, it “grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength.”

In order to give the character described here to the actions and to the life of an individual, I consider it as necessary, that all the faculties implanted in human nature, should be properly developed. It is not, that *virtuosity* ought to be attained in any direction, or that a degree of excellence ought to be anxiously aspired to, which is the exclusive privilege of pre-eminent talent. But there is a degree of development of all the faculties, which is far from the refinement of any ; and of such a course the great advantage will be, to prepare the mind for a more especial application to any line of studies congenial to its inclination, or connected with certain pursuits.*

* What Locke has said more generally of education, is strictly applicable to a course of exercises such as have been alluded to in

With regard to the claim which every human being has to a judicious development of his faculties by those to whom the care of his infancy is confided, a claim of which the universality does not seem to be sufficiently acknowledged,—allow me to make use of an illustration, which was on one occasion proposed by one of my friends. Whenever we find a human being in a state of suffering, and near to the awful moment which is for ever to close the scene of his pains and his enjoyments in this world, we feel ourselves moved by a sympathy, which reminds us, that however low his earthly condition, here too there is one of our race, subject to the same sensations of alternate joy and grief,—born with the same faculties,—with the same destination, and the same hopes for a life of immortality. And as we give ourselves up to that idea, we would fain if we could alleviate his sufferings, and shed a ray of light on the darkness of his parting moments. This is a feeling which will come home to the heart of every one,—even to the young and the thoughtless, and to those little used to the sight of woe. —Why then, we would ask, do we look with a careless indifference on those who enter life? why do we feel so little interest in the feelings, and in the condition of those who enter upon that varied scene,

the foregoing pages: “The business of education, in respect of knowledge, is not to perfect the learner in all or any one of the sciences; but to give his mind that disposition, and those habits, that may enable him to attain any part of knowledge he shall stand in need of in the future course of his life.”

of which, if we would but stop to reflect, we might contribute to enhance the enjoyments, and to diminish the sum of suffering, of discontent, and wretchedness? And that education might do that, is the conviction of all those, who are competent to speak from experience. That it *ought* to do as much, is the persuasion, and that it *may once* accomplish it, is the constant endeavour of all those, who are truly interested in the welfare of mankind.

LETTER XXXIII.

MAY 1, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

IN my last letter I described the end of education to be, to render man conscientiously active in the service of his Maker; to render him useful, by rendering him independent, with relation to society; and, as an individual, to render him happy within himself.

To this end I conceive that the formation of the intellect, the attainment of useful knowledge, and the development of all the faculties, may be made instrumental. But though they will be found highly serviceable as furnishing the means, they will not supply the spring of action. It would be preposterous, no doubt, to provide for the facilities of execution, without exciting the motives of a certain plan or line of conduct.

Of this fault, the process which frequently goes by the name of education, and which might more appropriately be denominated a mechanical training, is often guilty. The common motive, by which such a system acts on those over whose indolence it has conquered, is *Fear*; the very highest to which it can aspire, in those whose sensibility is excited, is *Ambition*.

It is obvious that such a system can calculate only on the lower selfishness of man. To that least amiable or estimable part of the human character, it is, and always has been, indebted for its best success. Upon the better feelings of man it turns a deaf ear.

How is it then, that motives, leading to a course of action which is looked upon as mean and despicable, or at best as doubtful, when it occurs in life—how is it, that motives of that description are thought honourable in education? Why should that bias be given to the mind in a school, which, to gain the respect or the affection of others, an individual must first of all strive to unlearn? a bias, to which every candid mind is a stranger.

I do not wish to speak harshly of ambition, or to reject it altogether as a motive. There is, to be sure, a noble ambition—dignified by its object, and distinguished by a deep and transcendent interest in that object. But if we consider the sort of ambition commonly proposed to the school-boy—if we analyse “what stuff ’tis made of,—whereof it is born,” we shall find that it has nothing to do with the interest taken in the object of study; that such an interest frequently does not exist; and that, owing to its being blended with that vilest and meanest of motives, with *fear*, it is by no means raised by the wish to give pleasure to those who propose it; for a teacher, who proceeds on a system in which fear and ambition are the principal agents, must give up his claim to the esteem or affection of his pupils.

Motives like fear, or inordinate ambition, may stimulate to exertion, intellectual or physical, but

they cannot warm the heart. There is not in them that life which makes the heart of youth to heave with the delight of knowledge—with the honest consciousness of talent—with the honourable wish for distinction—with the kindly glow of genuine feeling. Such motives are inadequate in their source, and inefficient in their application, for they are nothing to the heart, and “out of the heart are the issues of life.”

On these grounds it is, that in moral as well as intellectual education, I have urged the supreme character of the motive of sympathy, as the one that should early, and indeed principally, be employed in the management of children. On these grounds I have repeatedly urged the propriety of attending to that feeling, which I have no hesitation in declaring to be the first feeling of an higher nature that is alive in the child—the feeling, in the infant, of love and confidence in the mother. Upon this feeling I wish to ground the first foundation—and on a feeling analogous to it, and springing from it, I wish to guide the future steps of education.

That, in the infant, that feeling exists, there can be no doubt. We have for it the testimony of those who are most competent to judge, because best enabled to sympathise with it,—of the mothers.

To the mothers, therefore, I would again and again address the request, to let themselves be governed by their maternal feelings, enlightened by thought, in guiding those rising impressions, in developing that tender germ in the infant's heart. They will find, that at first, it is yet involved in the animal nature of the infant; that it is an innate feeling, strong, because not

yet under the controul of reason, and filling the whole mind, because not yet opposed by the impulse of conflicting passions. That feeling, let them believe, has been implanted by the Creator. But together with it, there exists in the infant that instinctive impulse of its animal nature, which is first made subservient to self-preservation, and directed towards the satisfaction of natural and necessary wants; which is next bent on gratification; which, unless it be checked in time, runs out into a thousand imaginary and artificial wants; which would hurry us from enjoyment to enjoyment, and which would end in consummate selfishness.

To controul, and to break this selfish impulse, the best, the only course is, for the mother to strengthen daily that better impulse, which so soon gives her the pledge, by the first smile on the lips, the first glance of affection in the eye of the infant, that though the powers of the intellect are yet slumbering, she may soon speak a language intelligible to the *heart*. She will be enabled, by affection, and by firmness, to bring her child to give up those cravings which render it so unamiable, and to give them up for her, the mother's, sake. By what means she can make herself understood—how she can supply the want of words and of precepts—I shall not undertake to answer for her: but let a mother answer, whether, conscious as she is of her own love for her child, a love enhanced by a feeling of duty, and enlightened by reflection, she will not, without either words or precepts, be able to find the way to the heart and the affection of her infant.

But if the mother has succeeded in this, let her not fancy that she has done every thing. The time will come, when the hitherto speechless emotions of the infant will find a language—when his eye will wander from the mother to other individuals within the sphere that surrounds him—and when that sphere itself will be extended. His affections must then no longer rest concentrated in one object, and that object, though the dearest and kindest of mortals, yet a mortal, and liable to those imperfections which “our flesh is heir to.” The affections of the child are claimed by higher objects,—and indeed by the highest.

Maternal love is the first agent in education; but maternal love, though the purest of human feelings, is human; and salvation is not of the power of man, but of the power of God. Let not the mother fancy, that she, of her own power, and with her best intentions, can raise the child’s heart and mind beyond the sphere of earthly and perishable things. It is not for her to presume, that her instructions, or her example, will benefit the child, unless they be calculated to lead the child to that faith, and to that love, from which alone salvation springs.

The love, and confidence of the infant in the mother, is but the adumbration of a purer,—of the purest and highest feeling which can take up its abode in a mortal breast—of a feeling of love and faith, now no more confined to an individual—now no more mixed with “baser matter,”—but rising superior to all other emotions, and *elevating* man by teaching him *humility*,—the feeling of love and faith in his Creator, and his Redeemer.

In this spirit, let education be considered in all its stages; let the physical faculties be developed, but without forgetting, that they form the lower series of human nature; let the intellect be enlightened, but let it be remembered, that the first science, which thought and knowledge should teach, is modesty, and moderation; let the discipline be regulated, and the heart be formed, not by coercion, but by sympathy, —not by precept, but by practice; and, above all, let it be prepared for that influence from above, which alone can restore the image of God in man.

LETTER XXXIV.



MAY 12, 1819.

MY DEAR GREAVES,

BEFORE I conclude, I wish to say a few words more—but on a subject of the most vital importance. *A few words* will suffice for those with whom we can sympathize, and others have seldom, if ever, been brought to agree by the most elaborate discussion.

I wish that no Christian mother may lay down this volume, without asking herself seriously, “Is the course, and are the measures recommended in these letters, in unison with principles truly Christian? Are they calculated merely to promote intellectual attainments, or to produce an appearance of self-made and self-styled morality? or, are they such as deserve the names of the first and preparatory steps to *Christian Education*?”

Let her answer this question to herself, to the best of her knowledge and her feelings, and upon the result let it depend whether she will adopt them, with such modifications as experience or circumstances will suggest, in the education of her children. If her answer be in the negative; if her heart should give

her warning, and matured reflection confirm it, that these principles are *not Christian*, then let them be rejected, and be mentioned no more.

In the mean time allow me to subjoin a few remarks on the leading principles of Christianity, on that distinguishing characteristic which rendered it "UNTO THE JEWS A STUMBLING BLOCK, AND UNTO THE GREEKS FOOLISHNESS;" but to all those who believe, "A POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION," and which will eventually make it to "COVER THE EARTH AS THE WATERS COVER THE DEEP." They are the remarks of an attentive observer, but of one who would fain let his heart speak, when his intellect might fail of guiding him safely, or his acquired knowledge of bearing him out. I hope that they shall satisfy, among all denominations of Christians, those who hold the Scriptures higher than any human comment; the word of God higher than any human authority; and who would rather have its *spirit* live in the heart, and be visibly manifested in all the actions of outward life, than see the *letter* of any particular tenets maintained with severity, and inculcated with violence.

The highest aim of the nations of the ancient world was national power and greatness; their religions could not give them an higher principle than one of selfishness, more or less refined.

There was, however, one exception, which formed the most striking contrast to it—the Mosaic dispensation. This religion urged strongly the weakness of the creature, and the infinite power of the Almighty; the strictness of the law, and the incapability of man to fulfil it; the trespassing of the guilty,

and the sanctity of the judge. Though it may appear at first a religion only of the law, and of terror, and of outward expiations, yet it was a religion also of faith. There were these "OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY," whose eyes were opened; who were inspired by the Spirit that "SEARCHETH ALL THINGS, YEA, THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD," who saw deeper than "the types and shadows of the ceremonial law,"—whose faith was strong enough to offer up, with the patriarch, the sum of their earthly hopes, to the divine will, and to speak with the Psalmist, "LORD, THOUGH THOU SLAY ME, YET WILL I TRUST IN THEE."

In the Christian dispensation, this principle of faith was preserved, as "THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN." But it was intimately united with the active principle of love.

The Christian doctrine, distant alike from encouraging the self-sufficiency of the Heathen world, and from holding out the terrors of the Mosaic law, taught man to look up to his Maker, not as to his Judge only, but also as to his Redeemer. The dreams of supreme power, by which one nation courted the absolute sway of the world, had vanished away; the monuments of their splendour fell into ruins together with the altars of their Gods; the high purposes, too, for which Providence had singled out from among the rest, the humbler tribes of one country, were accomplished, and Sion was no more the dwelling of the Most High, nor the point of union of all the faithful; and Christianity was hailed by all those whose love was warm,

and whose faith was strong enough to trust and to delight in its ultimate destination, as the religion of mankind. As such, Christianity has destroyed those barriers by which man had presumed to shut out his brother from the access to truth; it has invited all, the high and the low, to meet on one ground, a ground infinitely above the distinctions of rank, or wealth, or knowledge; and their meeting on that ground was not so much to be considered as a concession on the one side, or as a vindication of right on the other, but rather as the unanimous desire to embrace the free gift of God proffered to all. In this spirit, without disturbing their foundations, Christianity has raised the character of the social institutions; has animated individuals to stand forward, and, with the boldness of truth, but with the meekness of love, to plead the cause of their brothers; has urged some to bear her light, to unfold her standard in distant regions, and others to proclaim among those invested with power, her unequivocal claims, and thus to propose that great work, in the accomplishment of which subsequent ages may rejoice, and see—

“ At the voice of the Gospel of Peace,
The sorrows of Africa cease;
And the Slave and his Master devoutly unite
To walk in HER freedom, and dwell in HER light.”

For the ultimate destination of Christianity, such as it is revealed in the sacred volume, and manifested in the page of history, I cannot find a more appropriate expression, than to say, that its object is, to accomplish the education of mankind. Destined to

elevate all, it would soothe the sorrows of each; and however different the abilities, and the circumstances, all are to partake of "THAT ONE AND THE SELF-SAME SPIRIT, DIVIDING TO EVERY MAN SEVERALLY AS HE WILL."

If we look upon Christianity, as we are indeed fully justified in doing, as the scheme adopted by Infinite Wisdom to consummate the great end of the education of mankind, we may, from the contemplation of the means employed, deduce an unerring standard for all efforts of our own. We may, at the same time, be confirmed in the conviction, that Christianity is not a privilege confined to those only who, by any peculiar talents, or knowledge, or exertions, might appear better qualified to receive it than others, but that it is a gift freely tendered to all, though deserved by none;—adapted not to one condition of life, but to the fallen state of human nature—to that struggle of the flesh against the spirit—that strange mixture of contradictions—of conceited knowledge and of aversion to light—when man presumes, in puny strength, to work out his own salvation; when with his eye intent, and his heart entranced by the charm of perishable things, he yet imagines to fathom the depths of truth, and to climb the bright summit of happiness,—or when, in more gloomy vision, his affections centered all in self, he is led to proclaim truth a phantom, and love an empty sound—when, by turns, he flies from the turmoil of life to a world of dreams, and from the endless maze of solitary speculation, to the dissipations of life—when "HE SAYS, PEACE—PEACE—WHERE THERE IS NO PEACE!"

Among the passages of the sacred volume, which throw most light on the state of mind which is best fitted for the reception of Christian truth, I have always considered as one of the most illustrative, these words of the Saviour—"WHOSOEVER SHALL NOT RECEIVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A LITTLE CHILD, SHALL IN NO WISE ENTER THEREIN." What can there be in "a little child," deserving to be compared with a state of readiness for the Christian faith? It cannot be an effort of morality, or an attempt at high perfection; for the infant is incapable of any. It cannot be any degree of knowledge, or intellectual refinement; for the infant is a stranger to both. What, then, can it be, except that feeling of love and confidence, of which the mother is for a time the first and only object? That feeling is analogous in its nature and agency to the state of mind described by the name of faith. It does not rest on a conviction of the understanding—but it is more convincing than any syllogism could have been. Not being founded on it, it cannot be injured by reasoning; it has to do with the heart only. It is prior to the developement of all other faculties:—if we ask for its origin, we can only say, that it is instinctive;—or if we mean to resolve an unmeaning expression into the truth, it is a gift of Him who has called into life all the hosts of the creation—in whom "WE LIVE AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING."

Analogous to that emotion, like it imparted by the Giver of all that is good, is the state of mind of those who "BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL." Though infinitely elevated above it, it yet partakes in like manner of the nature of a feeling, as well as a conviction;

arising from both, it is invested with that energy, which brings forth fruits of love; it proves that true faith is kindred in its nature to active love, and that “HE THAT LOVETH NOT, KNOWETH NOT GOD; FOR GOD IS LOVE.”

That emotion in the infant mind, that adumbration of faith, and of love, can be dearer to none than to a Christian Mother. Let her be convinced that there is only one way for her to manifest her maternal affection—and that way is, to watch over the gift of God to her child—to be thankful to the Giver, and hoping that from Him, may come the increase, to do all in her power to unfold the germ; to be mild and firm, and persevering in the task; to look to her own heart for a motive, and to heaven for the blessing.

Happy the mother who thus leads her children to faith, and from faith to love, and from love to happiness. And thrice happy she, who has before her eyes, in her task, the recollection of one who, in genuine and unassuming piety, watched over the dream of her infant years—an example that, stronger than any precept, strong as the voice of maternal love in her own breast, calls upon her “to remember;—to resemble;—to persevere!”

THE END.



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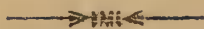
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